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THE MOST UNFORTUNATE MAN IN THE WORLD.

CHAPTER I.

A dreary sea now flows between,
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The *marks* of that which once hath been.

Coleridge's Christabel.

For what possible reason a man so unfortunate as myself was ever brought into this miserable world, I am quite at a loss to imagine. My parents were not unfortunate before me—none of my brothers or sisters — and, to my misfortune, I have nine of them—have been unsuccessful in life; I, only I, out of this family, appear the target marked out to be fired at by every malignant spirit. Fortune

and Robert Ganjam are sworn foes; and Robert Ganjam has only received so much of Fortune's bounty, as to have endued him with sufficient spirit never to repine over the greatest misfortune, and never to exult if the tide of goodness cover the low-water mark of misery for the extraordinary space of five hours of existence.

My uncle, Mr. Benjamin Banana, is quite the reverse; he is a man who has throughout life, with one exception, been fortunate; if the breeze of an ill wind took all his projects aback, he could pay round-off upon his heel, brace about, and to a certainty find a fair wind to blow him into port. Yet is he the most miserable man alive; he is a stranger to all comfort, because he finds fault with his comfort: no weather, no climate can please him; it is too hot in London during the summer, it is too cold in Paris during the winter; Spain is too treacherous, for what can equal a warm sun and a cool breeze? Italy, during March, none but an Italian can stand; and, with the exception of only one island in this miserable world,

he wonders how any nation can boast of its climate. He frequently avers that Russia and England are equally cold; "for," said he, "if a man is *frozen*, what can it signify for a degree or two of intensity?" He is rich, generous, warm-hearted, and affectionate, yet he is poor, penurious, indifferent, and reserved — he is a living contradiction; and the ingredients for making punch are not more at variance and yet produce a more generous end, than the component parts of my own uncle, Banana. He always declares he is the most unfortunate man in the whole world; whilst I, although I never avow it even in my dreams, imagine I am no despicable rival.

Our lives, mingled together, may not be either uninstructive or unamusing, and, in beginning my own, I shall only record that I was born during as violent a gale of wind, in as murky and dismal a night, as the blessed climate of England has ever produced during November; and Varley, who after my birth cast my nativity, declared I was under the special protection of Saturn, adding, with a grim smile,

that I should have through life "the devil's own luck;" and certainly he has been right, I have had the devil's own luck.

I am no friend to those poetical people who begin their stories in the middle and then trace back for a commencement; my plan, like Lord Byron's,

> "Is to begin at the beginning;
> I abhor all wandering as the worst of sinning."

I like my readers to walk by my side, but I sincerely advise them not to be so courteous to Banana, unless they are prepared to hear of more woes and miseries than either Sensitive or Testy* ever ventured to pour forth in their most acrimonious fits, or in their most desponding humours.

I was sent early to school, because I never could be kept out of mischief at home; the fact was, that whenever any of my ugly brothers broke the cups and saucers, set fire to the nurse's cap, put a hot cinder in her lined shoe, or purloined one of her false curls to play conjuror's tricks with, the blame invariably lighted

* The Miseries of Human Life.

upon my shoulders; I was either flogged forthwith, popped into a dark cupboard, or sent supperless to bed. It was rung into and upon my ears forty times, both with voice and hand, that "I was a good-for-nothing mischievous boy, and should never be a credit to myself or my family." I confess I cared very little about the latter, for, as long as I could be a credit to myself, I thought I could not be in debt to another.

It happened that my eldest brother, who was fortunate enough to die about the time that fortune began to turn against him, for he had just married, had left as a legacy to our nurse, a respectable good-looking soul, a very fine imitation bronze figure of an old man sitting upon a mountain, not unlike the picture of the Pleasures of Hope, corresponding to the following lines of my old friend Campbell's, (which Pleasures, I beg to state, I have long since abandoned, or only read occasionally, to satisfy myself how it is in the power of a clever poet to gull his readers:)—even I, the most unfortunate man in the whole world, (although I never

allow it publicly,) sometimes venture to hope that my tides of misfortune may not be like those of the river Amazon, six months at a time the ebb being about ten times as strong and as rapid as the creeping flood :

> " Now on Atlantic waves he rides afar,
> Where Andes, giant of the western star, &c."

This representation of Mr. Andes, without the star, was stuck upon the nursery chimney-piece, and every morning and evening underwent a dusting with a dimity rag, having as much care bestowed upon it as the ornaments on a lady's boudoir table. It so happened that my brothers and myself were possessed of those destructive weapons called cross-bows, but we had no target, for, ever since my second brother, in firing at a servant behind some nobleman's carriage, missed the gold-laced scraper of a cocked hat, and broke the glass and scarred the face of a young scion of nobility, for which, of course, I suffered, we had confined our operations to assailing any beggars or people whose garb denoted poverty, for that is always a safe mark, and no one need fear either re-

venge or retaliation. Poverty, they say, is no sin; but it is no small misfortune, it seems, to disinherit a man from his lawful property. Who believes a poor man? no one! If he ventures to complain, who heeds him? are we not justified by his poverty in believing some sinister intention to procure money? Besides, it has been proved by Dean Swift, and he was a clergyman, that the poorest person is always the most liable to suspicion; at least, the anecdote of the corkscrew would warrant the assertion. But if the poor could obtain no redress, they could move off, and move off they generally did, leaving us only a chance shot at our opposite neighbour's housemaids, as they opened the windows of a morning and shook the dust off the rug, for the benefit of the oculists. The devil—that is Saturn—who always had me under his protection, suggested to my mind that Andes would be no bad mark; the hint was loudly applauded, and forthwith we placed the bronze gentleman, (who had something about,

> "And like the baseless fabric of a vision
> Leave not a wreck behind,"

written on a white ground, on the rock against which he elegantly reclined,) upon an old baby-house, we standing at the distance of a long gallery from our target. The figure was as invulnerable as Achilles, and, like him, escaped the Sticks, until after a quarter of an hour's firing, with an occasional slight encroachment on the distance, my third brother, a young gentleman with as demure a countenance as a methodist parson when he mounts upon his chair to give a cool lecture to the surrounding and gaping crowd, fired, and, hitting Andes right in the face, verified the last above quoted line. This trifling incident produced great consequences; as usual, I was the victim, and, after being severely cuffed, even by the culprit, I was packed off to school, with my character pinned to me, as conspicuous as the tail of a monkey. I was the bearer of a letter, in which I was designated as the most mischievous urchin alive; all my own and my brothers' propensities were mentioned, and, in conclusion, I was most strongly recommended to the vigilance and attention of the schoolmaster. I re-

member his saying, when he had read the letter and eyed me with a malicious pleasure, "Oh, I shall cure him, my dear," (addressing his wife, who was a snarling, snappish, thin-necked, wizen-faced, sour-countenanced old hag; a kind of breed between a fortune-teller and a glass-blower; in fact, she had proved her ductility, and was so thin, that I expected to see her snap when she bent.) "Oh, I will cure him, or brooms shall be dear in the parish for the next six months!" I will give the devil his due, he certainly tried to cure me, for he pickled me more than once; and I am ready to make oath before any police-magistrate every quarter, when I go to swear that I am not a parson, that I was flogged fourteen times for nothing, although, thank Heaven! I am fortunate enough to have forgotten the smart; for we are not all over us, like the affectionate heart of the lady,

"Wax to receive and marble to retain;"

or I might be known by my marks, being in as regular lines as a crimping-machine for a lady's cap, or the outer coating of the under part of a

sucking-fish. If the orchard was robbed by any suppliers of Covent-garden, I was flogged; if any boy was seen out of bounds, I was flogged; if a riot occurred, I was flogged; until, latterly, I really think the old schoolmaster used to flog me in preference to using the dumb-bells, merely to keep his chest open. I remember these trifling sufferings, which greater disasters have not obliterated; they were the least of my woes: even the little kind hints from my master's worse half, were only as a few more thorns, which time has plucked out from all but memory.

I was grown to the goodly age of thirteen, when I was asked what profession I would choose; and this was the only opportunity I ever had of following the bent of my own inclination. I had a great hankering after India. My brothers had gone out in regular rotation to that country, in the civil service, and I confess I felt a great desire to walk in that beaten path; I could easily have reconciled an enlarged liver and the yellow *qui hi* countenance to my feelings; leaves in autumn

are yellow, and why should human nature differ from the rest of creation? Then, too, I had often heard my father, who had resided some thirty years in that sweet climate, talk of the pomp and honours of past days for ever to be foregone now: it was sweet music to listen to menials of office surrounding or heralding a great man, calling out, "Here comes the great tiger of war!" which tiger would have been blown down by any easterly wind, as he rounded the corner of Hanover-square, in full progress to the Mullagatawny Club. I dreamt of nothing but chubdars, hookar-badars, jemidars, abdars, chokedars, and everything ending in ars but jack-tars; and, having frequently heard my father affirm that any fool would do for India, I thought I might succeed quite as well as any of the numerous stupid fellows one sometimes may meet by accident, who have gone out to that land without a grain of gold or sense, and returned overburthened with both. Now, nothing—no, not even my misfortunes, which I never mention—annoys me so much, as to see the cursed,

cringing sycophancy of some men, who, seeing a gingerbread lout who rolls in a carriage and feeds upon turtle, whose head is as empty as his pockets are full, flatter and fawn, and ask his opinion, as if reason and talent had descended in the shower of gold from the pagoda tree. I, however, do not subscribe implicitly to the dicta of some authors, who assert it as a lamentable truth, that men who become rich by trade almost invariably become poor in intellect. Lord Byron says,

> "If commerce fills the purse, it clogs the brain."

Beyond a doubt, it is poverty which sharpens the mind; and poverty, under this consideration, since it obliges a man to read, and study, and fag, is the only tolerable misfortune in life, for that teaches us to stand firm against the rest: but the poor man must never aspire to talent. Churchill says,

> "Beggars of every age and station
> Are rogues and fools from *situation*;
> The rich and great are understood
> To be, of *course*, both wise and good."

And another very fair and very talented rhymer

has jammed the above four, quite innocently, no doubt, into the two following:

> "Who sighs for wit when turtles grace the board?
> Or who hears sense from any but a lord?"

It is wonderful how abstinence from the flesh-pots of either Ascension, Providence, or the Caymans, clears the head and invigorates the mind. God knows, I was starved enough to have known the right course; but, had I steered it, with the fair and steady breeze of life pushing me forward, unscarred or unscathed, I might, perhaps, have recorded more fortunate events than the remembrance of the most unfortunate man. My mind was fully made up to go to India, and I knew I could obtain, without difficulty, a writership: all my castles were beautifully built, and I saw in perspective a life of affluence, independence, and ease.

I was one day, in June 1809, sitting with many of my schoolfellows, under the shade of a large yew-tree, which stood in front of our school and near the old church, singing, to a tune of our own manufacture, a chorus from Dibdin,

"There's a sweet little cherub that sits up aloft,
To look out for the life of poor Jack."

In those days of naval glory, the wooden walls of Old England were the theme of national admiration; the fleets of England were England's praise; and the splendid victories which adorn our naval history, were not,

"With their heroes, quietly inurned."

The Navy were the conservatives of the country; no men were looked upon with more charitable eyes than sailors; all their faults and foibles were forgotten in their bravery and their services; and whenever a poet drew the character of a bold, straightforward, daring, foolish fellow, he was likened unto a sailor. Any beggar, habited as a tar, with his elbow stuck into the sleeve of his coat, having his long arm foreshortened, and who could muster up enough of a sailor's dialect, or nautical vocabulary, to say, "Look down, my lovely lady, with an eye of compassion on poor Jack, who lost his arm in the glorious battle of Trafalgar, under the immortal Nelson; just drop

a copper over your lee-quarter, and I 'll bear-up and pick it up?" was sure the appeal would not be in vain to any—*but a sailor.* Beggars, in those dresses made more than the half-pay of an admiral. But to a sailor the address was a bad one, for it implied that the solicitor had *got to windward* already; and sailors are by no means inclined to look down with an eye of compassion on any one who had laid his anchors out in that direction.

We had scarcely finished our chorus, when we heard its echo, not from any distant hill, but from the lungs of a man, who shortly afterwards came rolling and roaring round the corner. He wore a straw hat, cocked on one side rather knowingly; his inexpressibles were large enough for an Irish family to nestle in; he had a Guernsey frock, edged with blue, the word "Victory" in the same coloured letters thereon; a round jacket, the right sleeve of which was swinging untenanted as its master rolled along the pathway; his shoes were sharp-pointed and long-quartered, having a profusion

of string, whilst a long tail, carefully tied, dangled below the part where nature would have placed it in a monkey.

"Come, my little Britons," said he, "have compassion upon a tar, who has had the misfortune to have one of his spars shot away in the wars, and has scarcely any stores or provisions in his hold, or rigging over his masthead."

Our hands, not much accustomed to charity, simultaneously fathomed our pockets; and if we had recorded on our logs, in honour of the navy, the result of the soundings, it would have been not unlike the arming of the deep-sea lead, after a visit to the bottom of the Channel—"fine sand and small shells." Jack stood like a real sailor, one arm a-kimbo, the other holding out his hat, which was none the better for the weather it had experienced, and, in spite of a large broad ribbon which surrounded it, looked a most disreputable castor. One of the younger boys, a kind of cake-and-jam lad, with a pale face and long teeth, who every now and then got a seven-shilling

piece sent under the seal of his letter, managed, after many sighs and fetches, to bring up a halfpenny, which he placed in the reservoir of charity, looking as much as to say, Come, give me a nautical fight for this precious coin. The sailor began a flourish of nautical terms: he said the fleet were sailing *in* a bowling, when they saw the French fleet in irons to leeward; and that, after Nelson bore up, the enemy formed into a crescent. He talked of broadside and splinters, fire and smoke, boarding and sail-trimming, winding up his long yarn with various quotations from the monarch of nautical poetry, and concluded with declaring that no life was so happy as a sailor's, no man so free, no person so respected: he spoke of prizes and prize-money, as if he really had shared some; and concluded by wondering how any person could be a lobster of a soldier, or how men could be such land-lubbers as to live in a gale of wind on shore, when there was no security from chimney-pots or house-tiles.

"Thank you, my gallant little fellows," said he, as he placed his hat upon his long hair,

which hung clustering in ringlets over his face, "thank you; and may you never know the loss of a leg or an eye, or ever live to see a banyan-day, or have nothing but the sky for a mosquito-curtain."

He was soon lost to sight, but not to memory: I remember, as well as if it were only yesterday, seeing the gallant old fellow roll round the corner; and can even at this distance of time recall the sensations I then experienced, as I instantaneously resolved to make the sea the element of my future profession: all my pagoda visions floated away like a summer's cloud, and I stood cheated of my good intentions. The Sunday following we saw our gallant tar playing at cricket with the rest of the villagers, having recovered his lost arm, and being minus his tail and curls.

"Well, sir," said my father, "how long are you going to be in making up your mind as to the profession you intend to follow? For my part," he continued, "I do not exactly know to what service you would be a credit, but a chimney-sweeper — or the navy. You

are too scampish for a parson, and too bad for India, and, once uncloaked in one, or turned out of the other, certainly ruined; but if you were to fail in either of the two former occupations, you could afterwards turn either solicitor or marine officer: you have all the qualifications for the former, and any idle fellow will do for the latter."

"Sir," said I, "I have made up my mind to take the best of the two you have selected me as fit for; and therefore I will be a sailor."

"Humph!" said my father, lolling back in his great easy chair, and placing the fore-finger of his right hand against his right temple, wrinkling up his Indian skin, which arched over the nail like the hood of a cobra de capello, whilst the second finger occupied the space between his nose and upper lip—"Humph! a sailor, ay! Well, I have no serious objection; I have heard it often said, that any blockhead would do for the sea; and that the more devil there is in a youngster the better he gets forward in that rough profession. I like your spirit, but I am ashamed of your taste. You seem to have

resolved rather hastily, so do me the favour to be off to bed, and to-morrow, if you are still firm of purpose, I shall write to my friend Ruffle, who commands the Saturn at Plymouth to give you a rating, if he has one to spare."

Spare a rating, thought I, as I lighted my candle; I get plenty of those articles at home, and only leave it in the hope of avoiding them for the future.

I went to bed, but not to sleep. It happened that, about a month previous to this conversation, my third brother had died when I was at school, and the determination to be a sailor was made known on the very day of my arrival at home. The room in which I was to sleep had always been shared with my brother, and this was the first night I had taken sole possession of the chamber. Alas ! the dreariness of solitude ! how well calculated it is to shake the firmest nerves and inspire the most startling thoughts, none can tell but those who have experienced it.

I felt an awkward shudder as I looked at the untenanted bed, which so lately had been

warmed by my brother. As I undressed, I gazed upon it with a frightful stare; it was bare of clothing and without curtains—it looked a desolation: it alarmed me to think, and the night, which was gusty and windy, shook the little resolution I possessed, and left me the coward I felt I was. When I had undressed, I placed the candle on a chair near the bedside, and, covering myself in the sheets, endeavoured to force myself to sleep. It is not to be obtained by solicitation; it is the disdain of it that insures it, — court it, and you never obtain it.

My youngest brother was then about six years old, and slept with the maid, in her room, on the floor immediately below mine. This servant was of a steady age, and had so conquered all dispositions to riot in her blood, that she could scarcely ever bring herself to look a man in the face. In her hey-day of youth she had been unfortunate in love, — but, luckily for her, accident had prevented the natural development of her disgrace. The publicity being avoided, she grew coy by experience, and,

the one error retrieved, she resolved never in her life to run the risk of another. She had long since declared to my mother that I was too old to sleep in her room, for, independent of her delicacy, I was rather a wild and untamed boy.

It was Saturday night, and the weekly ablutions had taken place; my brother was in bed, but the nurse had lingered below until half-past eleven o'clock, and midnight had sounded before she had composed her decent limbs to rest. In vain I had tried to slumber I turned and twisted, and, in endeavouring to banish thought, thought the more; no position was comfortable; the unsnuffed candle had burnt to the socket; the paper which made it fit the candlestick was in a blaze, and the unusual glare warned me of the necessity of extinguishing it. I looked round the room like a hunted criminal, and with the breath of despair I blew out the light, and was in darkness: then came all the unpleasant imaginations of terror; I fancied more than once that I heard some light footstep in the room, and,

to avoid any thing so inimical to sleep, I enveloped myself in the bed-clothes. I had now worked myself up to a nervous agitation amounting to a most decided tremble, when I heard the clock on the staircase vibrate the hour of midnight, and scarcely had the record of time sounded the last warning, when the poker, tongs, and shovel fell down. No man startled by

"Graze of ill-directed knife,"

no man struck through the heart by a shot, or suddenly galvanized, ever jumped into a stiffer position: it was a right angle I made, for I sat upright in the bed, and with my hands endeavoured to keep my heart from bursting its cerement. The bed trembled like an aspen-leaf; a chair moved, or I fancied it. O that I could have extricated myself from my cursed confinement! I would gladly have had the canopy of heaven for my curtain; my imagination painted a thousand horrors; even the idea of a ghost, a thing in which I never placed the smallest credit, now occurred to me; I dared not open my eyes, for I dreaded to

meet the glare of glassy eye-balls almost starting from their sockets ; whilst the wan countenance, the skeleton figure, or the long, bony, extended arm and fingers, might chase the remnant of reason from my mind. Ah ! the shutter shook ! A hope of escape presented itself, the window was on the right, and the door on the left of the bed : with closed eyes and trembling limbs I jumped out, groped my hasty way to the door, seized the handle, tumbled down stairs, screamed all manner of murders, and, flying with rapid strides to the nursery, I burst open the door, jumped head foremost into the maid's bed, and there, concealed from sight, I panted in security.

When I jumped into the bed, the maid, who had previously extinguished the light, finding a human being her unwelcome companion, leaped out on the other side, and gave vent to her fright in a loud hysterical scream ; the shriek awoke my brother, who joined his lungs to the nurse's, and created a confusion beyond all description. The unusual sounds soon produced the footman, who, in his hurry to render assistance, forgot

to place any part of his livery on his back or legs, and burst into the room, with the candle in one hand and a poker in the other. This no "unreal mockery" produced another terrific squall from the maid, who, quite alive to the indelicacy of her situation, (for she was thinly clad to face a candle's light,) immediately rolled herself up in the curtain; whilst John, suddenly aware how far he had trespassed against the rules of modesty and decorum, followed the example of the maid, dropping the candle in his fright, and holding the poker in a straight line before him. The house was alarmed, a clattering was heard along the gallery, and, scarcely had John ensconced himself, when in came my father with a light, followed by the butler, who in his hurry had grasped a plate-brush. On seeing the footman wrapped up in the curtain, with only his powdered head sticking out, the nurse in a similar situation, and my little brother blubbering and crying, my father concluded, as the lady was not altogether devoid of personal charms, and had a most symmetrical figure, that some intrigue had

been on foot; that the servant had forgotten the rules of precedency, and had violated the sanctity of the bed-room. My father, who wore his white nightcap, and who stood in an attitude resembling Oratory in a shirt, had already begun a fine speech upon morality, modesty, virtue, propriety, confidence, and so forth, when I, half suffocated from my situation, and pleased beyond measure to find myself in such plentiful society, popped my head out from the bottom of the bed, and, for the soul of me, could not refrain from a sudden burst of laughter. My unexpected appearance, and from such a place, for no one had thought of remarking the bed, seemed instantly to awaken the company from a dream, and, had I not begun instantaneously to cut short my father's harangue, and explain the cause and effect, I might have been suspected, young as I was, of a disposition to imitate Don Juan, and perhaps have had a scuffle for my safety. In the mean time the maid-servants had arrived, and a general titter became audible; the nurse did not dare unrobe herself, and the footman, who I verily believe

was as modest as Joseph, and just as little garbed, had too much decency to expose himself to such a congregation of persons. My father allowed an unusual visit from a smile to rest upon his countenance, and began to retreat along the gallery, followed by the butler, who, at the desire of his master, went into my room to see that all was safe; on opening the door, out jumped a large cat,—the rascally intruder, who was the cause of coward being stamped for years and years afterwards upon my name!

It was agreed in the nursery that the maids should retire in good order to their respective beds, that the lights should be extinguished, and that then the footman should, under the cover of darkness and his only garment, decamp as hastily as prudence would allow. The retreat was beat, and shortly afterwards the household were at rest.

I did not dare return to my own room, and therefore was a sharer of my brother's bed, not without some remonstrance from the infuriated nurse, who showered down a heap of maledictions enough to bury any hero in the dust of

despair, and who finally thought proper to wind up her address with nearly the following words,—and good reason have I to place faith and belief in the curse of a woman. "You mischievous young vagabond," said the dear old soul, "may you through life feel the annoyance which I now feel! may you never know the blessings of quiet, and when you are nearest happiness and fortune, may they be blasted, as I think my character is now!" After which she said her prayers again of course, got into bed, and lay blubbering and sobbing until both grew fainter and fainter, when they lapsed into a snore, and she began to enjoy what she had so furiously denied to me. As I could not sleep, I resolved not to be singular as to the want of enjoyment of quiet, so I took the liberty to elongate my leg and disturb my brother, whenever I thought him on the point of slumbering: this led to an altercation, each mutually abusing one another for the disturbance, until we awoke the nurse, who created a much louder noise by boxing our ears: after which we fell into sweet forgetfulness; and

in dreamless slumbers, wasted eight hours of life.

I had hardly received my morning's welcome when a tailor made his appearance, and I was measured to be a midshipman : my mother drove away to Odell's, and paid more for a straight piece of iron, misnamed a dirk, than would have purchased a sabre fit for deeds of war; a cocked hat, as long and as low as an Indian's canoe, was tried upon my head, and voted, like the canoe, to contain *a skull.* An extra quantity of shirts and stockings were crammed into a large chest; and amongst these useful articles, I am in justice bound to say, a large cake was deposited. Two days following, my father received a letter from Captain Ruffle, mentioning his pleasure in being able to oblige the family; that he had a rating ready for a boy of the first class, and that the sooner I was despatched the better, as he was under sailing orders, and only waited for the gale to moderate before he put to sea. As winds are variable at Plymouth as well as the weather, it was resolved to start me off that evening at four

o'clock. Every preparation was made, and, as my father had a committee to attend at the Alfred club, or something equally important to be disposed of, he took a premature leave of me, gave me plenty of good advice in a few words, some little money, and a letter to deliver to Captain Ruffle on my arrival.

The whole concern, master and lumber, being ready, a hackney-coach was called, and, in the company of the butler, a gentleman who kept a secret key of the cellar, and who very frequently managed to rid himself of all worldly cares and concerns, we drove off towards the Saracen's-head, Snow-hill.

But that parting was not without a tear; the kindest of mothers fell on the neck of the most worthless of sons, and all the fountains of affection, chilled perhaps by my former misconduct, broke their springs and flowed from their natural outlet. "Robert," she said, "you have chosen a hard life, but one which has honour and glory for its rewards; you are from this instant a branch severed from the parent tree, the fruits and blossoms of which depend

upon the soil of the heart and the deep root which it takes. I know you are bold, impetuous, forward, (another word, I supposed, for impudent,)—temper these with discretion, and you must succeed. Never give way to misfortunes—this is your father's, and was your father's father's motto:—see here," she said, reaching a spoon, (which lay in a saucer on the table, in which was some jam and calomel for my brother,) "read this, 'Ne cede malis;' let this be your motto in the hour of misfortune, and the blessing of a parent light upon your head, and cheer your heart, when the storms of affliction shall howl around you, and the waves of distress threaten to destroy you! There, my boy, take this, perhaps, last kiss from your mother; the wildness of youth shall never be a blight upon my affection. I love you, doat upon you, admire you; whilst I live, you shall never want, and my power shall not be in vain when I solicit your father to overlook your follies."

The door, as it closed, jarred upon my heart; I felt a weight upon my mind no words can

describe. I jumbled over the stones, lost in thought, and yet thinking of nothing definable; and, whilst my ideas vibrated between the curse of the nurse and the blessings of a parent, the coach drove to the Saracen's-head, and I began life.

CHAPTER II.

Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enroll'd,
Extolling *Patience*, as the truest fortitude ;
And to the bearing well of all calamities.

Samson Agonistes.

We had arrived about half an hour previous to the departure of the coach : my chest was placed with the rest of the baggage, after considerable altercation about its size, and the butler, who had a visit, as he was pleased to call it, to pay in the neighbourhood, left me to wait for the coach and to pack myself off.

Curiosity led me to the street, and insensibly I wandered from the Saracen's-head. Feeling in my pocket for my money, for boys are always fond of handling their wealth, my hand

came in contact with my father's letter for Captain Ruffle, and that same curiosity which Dr. Johnson says is a sign of a vigorous intellect, prompted me to read the contents. As it was necessary for me to eye the writing carefully, I turned up one of the many lanes in the immediate vicinity of the coach-office, and which, from the few people who passed and repassed, offered an opportunity. It ran thus:

"Half-Moon Street, December 10, 1809.

"DEAR RUFFLE,

"I have sent you the little scamp you promised to take. I will venture to say you never commanded more mischief in a smaller space. I could make nothing of him, and his schoolmaster seems to have been equally unsuccessful; he has, however, some good points, especially for a sailor: he is daring and thoughtless, and incorrigible on shore, owing to his idleness; but he is straightforward enough, although as mischievous as any boy under the sun. I had intended him for India, but he took it into his head to go to sea, and I know

that, had I denied him his choice of a profession, he would have shipped himself on board a collier rather than balked his own inclinations. I commit him to your care; and, if the world does not belie you, your discipline will tame his unquiet spirit. Do not allow your friendship for me to interfere with any punishment you may think proper to inflict; the pain will be his salvation: remember, I leave him entirely to you.

"Mrs. Ganjam desires to be kindly remembered: of course, she feels this parting with another of her boys, but time will soon overcome her grief. I by no means envy you your Channel cruise, especially at this season of the year; but I hope your rollings and pitchings will be repaid by ample prize-money. I have lost no time in sending Robert; should he require money, I shall gladly honour any bills you may think proper to draw on his account. If you can spare a moment, write me a line.

Your's very truly,

JOHN GANJAM."

"Capt. Ruffle,
H.M.S. Saturn, Plymouth."

The last was the best part of the letter, but that sentence which recommended me so graciously to his discipline was the unkindest *cut* of all. I could not stifle the tear which involuntarily started from my eyes—I was alone—cast from my parents, and only to be remembered when the check was presented; had there been a wish expressed that the discipline might be tempered by moderation, I should have been satisfied: in short, there was not a word of real affection throughout the letter. This, thought I to myself, is the result of an improper curiosity. Listeners never hear any good of themselves, and those who pry into the secrets of others seldom find themselves complimented.

I had wasted about half an hour between the determination and the consummation of the act. I knew that reading a letter belonging to another was no very laudable affair, and, after having resolved to commit the trifling breach of faith, I wavered between the intent, and the gratification: the fact is, we are always slow to make the first false step, and conscience, our

natural guardian, stands a steady sentinel over the threshold of innocence; remove the guard by any act thought to be improper, make only the first advance to seduce the soldier from his post, and then, good night Virtue. It is like the drop of water which falls on the ground—scarcely perceptible—but let another, and another follow, and a hole is soon made, and the ground ruined. And thus it was that I began to make a hole in my manners and innocence.

It was high time for me to return to the coach-office, and with some difficulty I retraced my steps; to my astonishment I had overstayed the time, the coach had left the office more than half an hour, and was beyond the power of being overtaken: a porter proposed a hackney-coach to take me to the White-horse-cellar, but another told me to save my money and my trouble, for the coach never remained there more than ten minutes, and that it was as far as Kensington. The butler had never returned. My baggage had been sent to Plymouth, whilst its owner was left in the

world of London in solitude. My first idea was to return home, but I feared the consequences. My father was a man easily exasperated and hard to be reconciled; his temper, like straw, rapidly ignited, and burnt fiercely; but, unlike it in other respects, it was not so easily extinguished: the fault was clearly mine; I had left the coach-office when I ought to have remained, and now I remained when I ought to have left it. The porters who stood about the yard only laughed at my distress; the clerk in the office pointed to the clock and was very sorry; but the time had passed, and the evil was without a remedy: it was the last coach that left the office that day; it had not left it one minute before its time; and it was the passengers' business to be ready. The crowd of people who bustled into the office to book themselves for their various destinations, soon elbowed me from my place; the clerk having given his first answer, never condescended to add any further words than, "The coach started the same time to-morrow, and there was one place still vacant." Between the

fear and the indecision of a boy, I made no answer, betook myself to the street, and when I returned to take the place, some one else had forestalled me, and I was left to my own resources: had I known any thing of London, I might have taken a place in the mail, but I had only twelve shillings in my pocket.

Now came the first grand error of my life. I resolved on no account to go home; and, in the idle vacancy of indetermination, I wandered from street to street until I lost my way. What to do—whither to go—where to shelter myself—I knew not: the day, which closes at four o'clock in the smoky city, soon began to be enveloped in a thick mist; the lights in the streets were scarcely discernible; and when the clocks struck six, it was night. I was now in the vicinity of Tower-hill, perfectly ignorant of my situation, nearly wet to the skin from a small mist which had continued to fall; hungry and tired, a dirty-looking eating-house attracted my attention, and, with the boldness of despair, I entered and asked for something to eat.

The man who stood behind the counter was a stout, ill-looking fellow; he eyed me with a look of surprise, and bade me walk into the back room and be seated; he in the mean time called a ragged servant, to whom he whispered with some eagerness, and who immediately placed me by the side of a small, cheerless fire, and commenced a conversation as to my wants. By degrees this girl, who was about seventeen, and pretty, though dirty, extracted the whole of my story, the amount of my money, and my ignorance of any future plans. She returned to her master, who shortly afterwards brought me in some beef and beer, which he desired me to pay for at the time, asking me the sum of four shillings: this I paid without a thought; it never occurred to me if it was cheap or dear; I only knew that I was hungry, and very shortly the wretched meal disappeared and I asked for a replenish: it was brought, and four shillings more were paid. I had scarcely begun the second attack, when the maid returned, being followed by two hard-featured men, dressed like sailors,

who took their seats by the fire, and called for some beer. Had I been a judge of men from their outward appearance, I should have felt very uneasy at my situation; I was as innocent as a dove in the world's ways, and fancied every kind word arose from a kind heart. The two strangers were engaged in close conversation, which was interrupted for the moment by one of the party pouring some beer in a glass and offering it to me; as I had some of my own, I thanked him and refused the offer. About this time a third person entered the room, and sat down at a small table at a little distance from the others; he seemed to know them, but they exchanged no words. The first two now began to talk out loud of their success during the evening, saying they had crimped four or five pretty good seamen, and that they expected before midnight to get some more.

"I wish," said the man who entered the room last, "that I could find one or two able seamen for my brig; for I want to sail to-morrow, and, thanks to some of you good-

natured gentlemen, I have not men enough to heave my anchor up."

"For the matter of that," said one of the rough-looking couple, "I dare say we can accommodate you, if so be that you don't keep your purse-strings so close; but, you know, sailors just now are rare articles, and they likes the men-of-war better than your service; for if they now and then get a taste of the cat, yet they get a drop of grog, and they make prize-money by heaps in the frigates: we can give you a couple of landsmen; you can dock their coats; and when you get them into blue water, you can teach them something better than to swab the decks."

"Ay, ay," said the first speaker; "but the difficulty is to get into blue water, and long before we get into the chops of the Channel we may fall in with a gale. I have only six able seamen on board, and I am bound up the Straits."

"What ship, sir?" asked the other man, who was a large-whiskered, rough-looking baboon, with a tail as long as an African mon-

key's; a roll of tobacco, big enough for a bottle-stopper in his mouth, and which was sticking out like the pouch of a well-stuffed marmoset.

"The Rapid," replied the third man.

"Oh! she as lays down abreast of the docks, with the white yards, and sliding gunter royal-mast; why she looks like a man-of-war brig, more than a Smyrna-man."

"Just so," said the Captain; "I make her look as much like a man-of-war as possible, for I never wait for convoy; and, if I am forced to take the instructions, I give the Commodore the slip the first dark night, and make sail ahead."

"That might be dangerous though," said the first man; "the French luggers are quick, and have the heels of any of you that carry a cargo."

"That's true; but a faint heart, you know, never won a fair lady. I think less of the Frenchmen than of the Algerine gentlemen; who, if we have not men enough to beat off their rascally feluccas, are sure to pop upon

us as we hug their coast to keep clear of the Esquerques."

"Ah! you are out of my latitude now," said the first man; "but if so be that two men will suit, why, do you see, we will try to accommodate you; but could not you manage with one good one, and a youngster, about the size of that one there?" said he, pointing to me: "why he would be a capital hand for a top-gallant yard; a light lad aloft for your fine weather scrapers."

"Ay, he'd do well enough aloft after a little; but he is a light hand for a cargo, and too slender to work at the hold: but I want a lad, and he's just the cut that would suit; but I must alter his suit to his new cut if I have him. Well, young one," said the Captain, "what do you say to a trip up the Straits? when you come home you'll be a man, and not like these fellows that walk up and down London streets all their lives, only seeing the shops, or what's in a gentleman's pocket, for which curiosity they sometimes dance upon nothing."

I told him I was intended for the sea, and that I was to join the Saturn; that I had lost my passage in the coach, and that I did not know what to do, or where to go.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the baboon; "a midshipman adrift! what a lucky fellow you are! Why you had better been drowned than go to sea with that old Ruffle: why, he would stick you at the mast-head for hours together. I never shall forget that fellow, when he hung eleven men and his boatswain one morning in Jamaica; they called him Captain Killdozen ever after."

"Yes," said the Captain, "you have had a lucky escape. Was it not Ruffle who used to flog his midshipmen every Monday morning, or make them ride the spanker-boom in a heavy sea-way? How many of them did he expend one cruise he took in the Channel?"

"About ten," said the baboon; "he used to bait his shark-hooks with them. Suppose, young gentleman, you were to go on board the Rapid with that gentleman, and see how you like your berth? You can't get to the

Saturn now, for she sails to-morrow at daylight."

I said I had no objection to go on board the Rapid. Instantly all three rose, and told me to bear a hand, as the boat was waiting; adding, that I could sleep on board, and that I could come on shore in the morning, if I did not like being a cabin passenger.

"Or," said the first man, "if you don't like the Rapid, the Captain will no doubt," said he, looking knowingly at the gentleman, "put you on board your frigate, which he is sure to meet, — indeed, he will go into Plymouth on purpose."

I thanked the Captain for his kindness, which, he said, was giving him no trouble whatever: indeed, he remarked that he would do more; he would, if I liked it better, keep me on board of his brig, and teach me to be a sailor. By this time I had put on my hat, and was ready to go, when we were stopped by the baboon.

"Avaust there, shipmate," said he to the Captain; "all in the regular way, you know;

we must have two pounds for him; no doubling the Cape, or fighting Tom Cox's traverse; we dogged him, you know, and it's all the same as if we put him on board."

"Surely, surely," said the first one; "and before morning we will give you the other; but pay and go, you know, like a hawser in a boat."

"No," said the Captain, "I don't see why I should pay for him; I found him here, and—"

"Oh dear, Sir," I replied, "I *have* paid; I paid eight shillings for my supper."

"Did you?" said the rough-looking fellow, "then old Stout took the first of the breeze at any rate, and had the ballast out before he sent to tell us that the craft was adrift."

A long altercation took place, words ran high, they talked of kidnapping the boy, and after many differences it was arranged that, when the other was shipped, all was to be squared, as they termed it: after which, the two sailors wished us a good night, and a fair wind in the morning. The Captain threw an

old plaid cloak over my shoulders, and, taking me by the hand, led me into the street.

It was a thick fog; the weather was rainy and windy, cold and piercing; the streets were insufferably dirty, and the whole was emblematical of my false step. We had not gone far, when we were accosted by about a dozen watermen.

"Boat, sir? boat, sir?"

"You'll do," said the Captain; "shove ahead, my lad."

"Take care, sir," said the boatman, "take care you don't slip, sir; very greasy weather: take care, young gentleman: let me carry your cloak,—there, sir;—sit still, if you please;—here, Jack, look after our gang-board. What ship, your honour?"

"The Rapid," said the Captain.

"I knows her," replied the boatman; "I took the Captain's son on board about an hour ago; and a sweet nut he is for the devil to crack."

"Why so?" said the Captain.

"Oh! he can't be more than fourteen, and

he had two ladies in the boat with him; but the mate would not let him take them on board."

"Is that all?" replied the Captain, and began to whistle a tune.

We were soon alongside the brig. The Captain, whose name was Smith, introduced me to his son, who was a short, stout-built lad for his age. He had made two trips with his father before, and told me of the pleasure he had experienced in visiting foreign parts; he was, however, a low, coarse, vulgar boy, the image of his father, both in manners and face. Although the Captain had mentioned his only having a few men on board, yet I fancied the vessel was crowded. I heard numerous voices, all in conversation about going to sea: every now and then a boat came alongside; and during the whole night there was a continued noise, arising from the frequent visiters. I was sent to bed with the Captain's son, and told to go to sleep immediately, as if a person could sleep whenever he chose.

At day-light the Rapid was under weigh, the

wind was light and variable, and the tide was in her favour; she slipped through the water quickly: we soon left Greenwich behind, and by the turn of the tide, or the first of the flood, we were far down towards the entrance of the Thames. The breeze soon freshened, and, about two o'clock, the sky began to assume a threatening appearance; the brig was kept under all the sail she could bear, and towards night an easterly gale had fairly established itself. I was sick, and went down to the cabin where I had previously slept, but I was soon hauled from that abode by the Captain's son, who, giving me a kick, called me a lazy impudent young hound, and bade me be off to the fore-peak with the rest of the ship's company. If I had been his equal in strength ten hours before, now I should have been vastly his inferior. Of all utter prostrations of mind and body, none are so powerful as sea-sickness. The first chilling herald, followed by the frequent yawns, seems alone sufficient to annihilate a person; but when succeeded by the splitting head-ache, the intolerable cold, the frequent sickness and

whirling giddiness, then it is that people become quite indifferent as to life. The kicks of young Smith were only answered by sighs and groans; and there I should have remained a living nuisance, had not two stout fellows seized me by the arms, and, lugging me along the deck, left me on the lee side of the forecastle. The deck was wet with the sea, which every now and then flew over the vessel; the wind howled through the rigging; the night was dark; and the rain, which fell in continued showers, added to the misery of my situation. I will not say I thought of home, for I was incapable of thought; I was as indifferent to the world and to life as a man in a torpid state from cold; sick, dreadfully sick; amongst strangers, all busy in their own avocations; the ropes were flying about in all directions. The captain was cursing and swearing; the men were shortening sail, or close-reefing the topsails; "the hoarse wind made the treble and the bass," and I alone seemed to be a forsaken boy in the confusion of the night. One of the men, however, when he found me in the coil

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of a rope which he happened to want, hauled me towards the ladder, and slid me down into the fore-peak; there I lay partly insensible, and almost inanimate.

By degrees the sickness abated, and I was inclined to venture on deck. The vessel was still flying before the wind, the sea occasionally flew over her; every thing looked in confusion; the men were lying about, some in their wet clothes, and some wrapped up in large thick rough coats. It was broad day, the weather was foggy and rainy, nothing could be seen but my new element and our solitary vessel. Scarcely had I put my foot on deck, clinging to one of the ropes to prevent my falling down as the vessel rolled over the sea, when the Captain's son saw me; he was standing by the man who was steering the brig, and looking aloft, then at the sea which was tumbling after the vessel — and rolling his sharp eyes about, they fell upon me.

"Here, you young vagabond," said he, "come aft here, and don't be hanging on to the fore-bits like a swab to the head-rails."

I felt awed somehow by the manner in which he spoke. I relinquished my grasp, and endeavoured to get aft, but scarcely had I got abreast of the gangway when I fell down and rolled over to leeward. The malicious boy, if boy he could be called, for he was a man in iniquity, laughed at my misfortune, and repeated his command in a more authoritative tone, assisted by a curse.

"Well, you sprawling whelp you, are you going to sleep in the lee scuppers, or are you going to obey me? By the Lord, I'll freshen your way with a rope's end, if you don't spring your luff when I speak to you!"

This was to me, what it may be to the reader, an unintelligible mass of words, and, in all probability, any explanatory note from Smith would only have rendered the passage more obscure. I understood quite enough of it, and I endeavoured to obey his orders, and managed to get near him. At this moment the Captain came on deck, but how altered from his former looks! he was dressed in a round jacket, a glazed hat, and a thick pair of rough inexpres-

sibles; he was the most diabolical-looking ferocious man I had ever seen. He first looked at the compass, then at the sails, and then saluted the man who was steering, in nearly these words:

"Why don't you steer her with a small helm? What the devil are you yawing about so, like a pig in a fair? look at her wake, you sleepy hound, you. Why, it has as many twists as a snake; by and by you'll bring her by the lee, if you keep bobbing over the tiller like a fisherman's float. Oh! you're alive, are you?" said he, addressing me. "Come, none of your shore-going laughs here, if you please. Why, you're as dirty as any other of your Tower-hill messmates:—here, Bill," said he to his son, "get a pair of shears and dock his coat-tails for him."

"Ay, ay, father," responded the little imitator of tyranny, and down he jumped into the cabin: returning in a moment with a pair of large scissors, he caught hold of my coat-tails and cut them off in a moment. Shall I crop his head too?" said his son, and, without waiting for an answer, he whipped off my hat,

and with a close of the scissors left one side of my head nearly bare. In vain I cried; I was quite helpless, for, had I relinquished the hold of the rope to which I clung, I should perhaps have rolled overboard the next minute.

"Come, none of your holding on there like death to a sick man," said the Captain; "try and get your sea-legs. I am not going to feed you for doing nothing, as they do in the King's service; I am not going to have any of the King's hard bargains here—fellows with short hair and long teeth; trot down and clear away the cabin for breakfast. Bill, show him how to set about it, and make him your mate."

"Ay, ay, father," said the ruffian, and, catching me by one ear, I was soon in the cabin.

"None of your lobstering," said he: "you're mammy-sick, I suppose; but I'll soon work that out of you. Come, clear away the decks here, and then run forward to the coppers for some water; and mind you wash that dirty face of yours, or, by the Lord, I'll souse you in a bucket of salt water."

Here was a deplorable change! From the enjoyment of every luxury, I had become suddenly a slave—a slave to my inferiors in every requisite of life. I had been brought up with all the ideas of a gentleman, and suddenly found myself the cabin-boy of a brig, without a single article of clothing but that which was on my back, my whole fortune consisting of four shillings. I had no bed; in short, was as helpless a pauper as ever breathed. A sailor-like compassion was evinced by some of the seamen; and, in spite of the assertion of the Captain that he had not sufficient hands to weigh his anchor, after a day or two at sea we mustered twenty-five men besides myself. But all attempts to relieve my situation were opposed by the Captain's son, who said that some two years back he had entered on board a frigate, and was midshipmen's boy; that the ill-usage he had then received made him vow eternal vengeance upon anything bearing the name of a gentleman, if ever the chance occurred by which he should become master: his time had come; and he followed

up his vow with a curse that he would be revenged upon me; that I should know the bitterness he had tasted; and that mercy was a word he once had used but never found. He had scarcely concluded his speech, when a sail was reported right ahead, our brig being then about half-way down Channel, running with the wind broad on the larboard-quarter, with only her close-reefed topsails and foresail set, going at the rate of about nine knots an hour.

The stranger was soon seen from the deck: she was a large frigate; on the larboard tack she hove-to under her close-reefed main-topsail and fore staysail: she looked in the haze as large as a three-decker, and appeared to roll very heavily. She was evidently an English frigate; the cut of the sails of a Frenchman, and the rake of the mast, were so strikingly different that it required no conjuror in naval tactics to know the distinction at half a glance; but, to remove all doubts, for she had made us out to be English, she hoisted her ensign, and fired a gun to windward. No sooner was

this done than every man but seven were stowed away below: some were clapped under empty casks; some in the bights of the cables, covered over with swabs; and all concealed but the above number; for, although it blew what the sailors called great guns and small arms, we knew that the English men-of-war, when in pursuit of either prize-money or seamen, cared very little for the winds and waves, as long as they gained their object. The Captain seemed unusually agitated, and swore that if his men were found his ship would be detained: he went below, and, turning me out of the cabin, began to collect some papers, having first left directions to keep the frigate about a point and a half on the starboard-bow. We of course neared her fast. The mate, who was a hard-featured, rugged-looking seaman, popped his head down the hatchway, and told the Captain that the frigate was about a mile off, and that he could see some men clearing away the lee-quarter boat. Upon this, Smith determined to pass within hail; for he thought, and he judged rightly, that, when the Captain of the

frigate heard that he had only sailed the day previous from London, he would not risk his boat's crew in boarding him.

We now braced the fore-yard sharp up, as if intending to heave-to under the lee of the stranger, and steered for her stern. The Captain was seen sitting on the taffrail, with a speaking-trumpet in his hand, and when within hail he began :

" Brig, ahoa !"

" Sir !" answered Smith.

" Where are you from ?"

" London."

" Where are you bound to ?"

" Gibraltar."

" How many men have you ?"

" Seven," was the reply ; and here, as the Captain of the frigate seemed satisfied, Smith said, " May I ask, sir, what ship ?"

" This is His Majesty's ship the ' Saturn.' "

I held up both my hands ; I cried out, " Here am I ! here is Robert Ganjam, sir ! do take me on board, sir." But my tiny voice was unheard amidst the roar of elements, and the

Captain's son seizing me by both ears, and kicking me most violently, only said, "Hold your tongue, you young devil you; what business have you to bellow out? who asked you to bawl? Take that, and be cursed to you," said he, as he struck me in the face, and knocked me down the companion.

The frigate, as if perfectly satisfied, hauled down her ensign,—a signal always understood as implying that the other vessel was at liberty to continue her course; we did the same. I was on deck again in a moment, and actually knelt down to Captain Smith, and implored him to put me on board the frigate. "You know what you promised," said I; "you know I told you I was about to join that ship; all my clothes are on board—the Captain expects me—oh! do, for God's sake let me go! here is a letter for Captain Ruffle; here it is, sir!"

"Forward there," said Smith.

"Sir?" answered one of the men.

"Bring a wet swab here, and see if you can choke this boy's luff. Here, Bill," said he, call-

ing his son, who was below, "look after your boy, and gag him: why he makes more noise than the devil in a gale of wind."

My relentless persecutor, pleased beyond measure to execute any order to tyrannize over me, took the wet swab, and tied it over my mouth, letting the end hang down on my shoulders, and saying, "Now, mate, touch your hat to one of his Majesty's officers; don't you see the swab* upon his shoulders? Why, bless you, this is Lieutenant Ganjam, of His Majesty's ship the 'Saturn:'—ah! damme but I 'll *jam* him a little tighter than Jackson, who was jammed between the fly of the ensign and the mizen rigging. Here," said he, "turning my face towards the frigate, take a last look at your fine ship, my boy; and if you don't behave yourself, we'll sell you for a slave elsewhere;—look at her," said he. I did, and so did he, but with very different countenances: mine was all joy—his all despondency: the frigate was in the act of bearing up, and in

* A swab is a vulgar name for an epaulette in the nautical tongue.

two minutes was running our course with her three topsails and foresail set, throwing the sea clean over her, and apparently flying in pursuit of us.

Captain Smith looked as pale as death when he came on deck and saw the frigate: he looked at her with the eye of despair when he saw her "walk the waters like a thing of life." To make more sail, and endeavour to effect an escape, would be madness, for it would only give room for suspicion, without the slightest prospect of success. I could not refrain from saying to his son, "Now it's my turn to be master, so please to take off my epaulette; only let me get on board of her once, and then it will be my fault if I don't repay you for all your ill-treatment." He took the swab from my neck, and seemed inclined to sue for pardon. The frigate was fast approaching; every time she rolled, her decks, crowded with men, were visible; she was shaking two reefs out, and making more sail, steering so as to pass us to windward. I stood on the weather-quarter, with the eye of hope sweetened by

expectation; I never remember to have felt such a delightful glow as at that moment; but soon, soon alas! all my fairy visions were destined to fleet away—soon all my prospects of release were to give way to the reality of tyranny.

The Captain, whose eyes seemed to sweep the horizon in all parts at once, and to remedy all probable disasters in a moment, soon grew more composed. "Send all the men but five down below," he said; "the frigate is not coming after us at all; she is in chase of that lugger to leeward." Here all eyes fell upon the spot indicated, and there was a vessel crowding under all canvass she could spread, steering the same course as ourselves, and about five miles distant. The mist had concealed her from our sight, and it appeared that she had but just discovered the frigate, for the Captain said that when first he saw her, he could see between her masts, and that she must have been lying-to in the hopes of making a prize of us. This intelligence damped all my hopes. My little tyrant promised to

repay me for my kind intentions, as soon as we were clear of the frigate; and, by way of making his revenge the sweeter, lashed me to the weather-quarter, with my face towards my own ship, and my hands tied in such a manner that I could not make any signal. Meanwhile, the frigate surged through the water, and edged down so as to pass within hail of us without losing any ground with her chase: every time she threw the spray over her bows, she seemed to spring towards us. She was now close: I called to Captain Ruffle; I told him I had a letter for him; I cried out my name; but all was unheard; and when Smith thought I might by accident attract attention, he came behind me, and putting both hands over my mouth, laughed at my ineffectual attempts to hail, and kept mimicking my voice as it gurgled through his fingers.

"Brig, ahoa!" said Captain Ruffle.

"Sir!" answered Smith.

"You had better make more sail, and keep sight of us as long as possible, for that is a French privateer to leeward."

"Thank you, sir, thank you," said Smith.

The frigate ranged close up alongside; our sails, becalmed under the lee of her greater canvass, flapped idly against the masts;—she surged by us; and when young Smith liberated me—she was out of hail for ever!

CHAPTER III.

Ferdinand Mendez Pinto was but a type of thee,
Thou liar of the first magnitude.

CUMBERLAND.

THE morning after my departure, the party in Half-moon-street were at breakfast as usual: Mrs. Ganjam was apparently slightly indisposed, Mr. Ganjam seemed uncommonly indifferent as to every earthly object but himself and his food, and Mr. Banana, who had accidentally dropped in to ask about the rate of interest on the Bengal Remittable Loan, had just unbuttoned his coat, pulled down his waistcoat, and given a hasty glance at a mirror, when in came Miss Ganjam, who seated herself at the officiating post of honour, having previously rung the bell.

"Roberts," said Miss Ganjam, as the butler entered, "this water does not boil; take the urn out and remedy this *inadvertence*, I suppose I must call it."

"Oh!" said Mr. Banana, "nothing goes right in this wretched town; I really am the most unfortunate man in the whole world. I believe this is the only time, since I returned to this villanous climate, that I ever ventured without my umbrella, and of course, down comes the rain, sufficiently heavy to swamp a Chinaman."

"Does it rain, Banana?" said Mr. Ganjam: "I hope you are not wet."

"Does it," replied Banana, "ever cease raining in this wretched country? I declare one might as well expect a total cessation from taxation as a glimpse of sunshine between the first of November and the end of March."

Roberts returned with the urn hissing and spluttering like a catherine-wheel.

"Did you see Master Robert start in the coach yesterday?" said Mr. Ganjam.

"Yes, sir," replied the butler: "Master

Robert went exactly at half past three o'clock. The coach was quite full: four ladies and one elderly gentleman were inside, besides himself. I asked one of the ladies to take care of him, and she assured me she would see him safe to the inn."

"Did you see his trunks properly placed?"

"Yes, sir; one in the fore-boot, and the other two on the roof. I told Master Robert where all his things were: he seemed very comfortable and pleased."

"Comfortable and pleased," sighed Banana, "in a coach with four old women and one old man, there to sit jammed and squeezed like a lemon in a vice, for the comfortable period of eight-and-forty hours! or only allowed to breathe an intolerable atmosphere when the horses are too tired to pull the coach up a hill: comfortable and pleased! Well, my nephew must certainly be a man who would find comfort and pleasure in the Black-hole at Calcutta."

"He will have enough to do to find it in a midshipman's berth," replied Mr. Ganjam.

"Poor, dear, darling boy!" said Mrs. Ganjam; "he will be dreadfully cold this wretched weather: I hope they will not make him keep a night-watch till he is stronger."

"My good gracious goodness me!" said Miss Ganjam, "how differently people feel and think! Now, I should like to go to sea, if only to watch; and——"

"I should like some tea, if you please, Jane; I have been watching long enough for it. Now for some poetical romance, I suppose," remarked Mr. Ganjam.

"Roberts," said Mrs. Ganjam, "I hope Master Robert had a corner seat in the coach."

"Yes, ma'am," replied the lying valet; "he sat, as you desired, with his back to the horses; and I told one of the elderly ladies, who wanted to exchange places, that my young master was generally sick in a coach, and therefore it was requisite that he should be near a window."

"Comfortable and pleasant intelligence enough for the others to hear!" said Ba-

nana. —" I hope, to make him quite happy, there was an infant in the coach."

" Yes, sir," replied the butler ; " there was an infant about six months old, which was crying a little ; but I think it was weaned, sir, for the lady had a bottle with a piece of leather at the end, and was trying to quiet the poor little thing."

" Poor little devil !" snorted Banana — " poor Robert, I say !"

Breakfast was now progressing in the usual manner ; a slight skirmish of politics between the gentlemen had taken place ; the best investment for money had been seriously commented upon : Miss Ganjam had nearly recited half Pope and Milton in quotations, and Young's Night Thoughts, and all the starry firmament above, had been romantically alluded to, when the footman came in with a letter, on a silver waiter, which was handed to Banana.

Banana lived only two doors distant from Mr. and Mrs. Ganjam, and he usually breakfasted and dined with them. It was his posi-

tive direction that no letters should ever be sent to him, and this deviation from his orders arose from the word "immediate" being on the back. The footman said that the servant waited for an answer. Banana was a very nervous man, and stood in contradistinction to Ganjam, who was one of the coolest of all human creatures, and, although irritable from a peculiarity of temper, yet one who only allowed this flourish of tongues to be lavished on his own family: he could bite his lip and swallow his spleen better than any man alive, and, like Mount Etna, looked very calm and still, whilst a fire was raging within him.

"How excessively provoking," growled Banana, "that a man cannot have two minutes to himself out of *any* twenty-four hours! here, independent of the postage, which is the most rascally imposition ever thought of by any government, one is obliged to read the contents and write an answer at breakfast."

"I don't see exactly what postage you can have to pay for that, seeing that a servant

waits for an answer," said Mr. Ganjam coolly, " or why you are obliged either to read it or to answer it at breakfast."

" Good God !" ejaculated Banana, " don't you hear that the servant is waiting?"

" Well, let him wait," replied Ganjam; " the servants were made for us, and not we for them. I really wonder how you can suffer yourself to be annoyed by such insignificant trifles."

" Trifles, forsooth!" sighed Banana; " why, it is a lawyer's letter, as I 'm alive! I hate them all — even to speak to them — for they *charge words;* and if once they get you into a correspondence, then no man knows how long the bill may be; but this scoundrel, who has had the impudence to write to me, and to disturb us at breakfast, I never heard of him, or his client, or anything that is his. Here it is:

' Furnival's Inn, Dec. 11, 1809.

' SIR,

' I am instructed by my client, Mrs. Wrathful, to give you legal notice to quit the

apartments you hold of her at the rent of twelve pounds per month, on or before Christmas-day next.

Yours obediently,

JAS. NOAKES.'

'To Benj. Banana, Esq.
16, Clarges Street.'

"So that, in this free country, I am bothered at breakfast by some miserable, dirty, six-and-eightpenny attorney, and told to turn out of my house, neck and crop, on Christmas-day; that is, in the middle of winter, to catch cold by going into some dirty, damp apartments, without any reason being assigned, with very little law and a great deal less justice."

"Eat your egg, my dear Banana, and let the lawyer's letter precede the attorney to his future destination—the devil! However, you will have to pay him for his letter, whether you turncut or not."

"Pay him for his letter!—I'd see him d—first! I beg your pardon, Miss Ganjam; I hope you will pardon the impetuosity of my temper: I assure you the words flew to my

lips before I had made an agreement with my tongue."

"Oh, never mind, my dear uncle," simpered Miss Ganjam, "either the words, the letter, or the lawyer; they are all three bad enough: papa will tell you after breakfast what you had better do."

"The gentleman who brought the letter, sir," said John, "and who is a lawyer's clerk, wishes to know if there is any answer."

"Tell him," said Ganjam, "that he will hear from Mr. Banana's solicitor in the course of the day."

"Hear from *my* solicitor!" vociferated Banana, "*my* solicitor! Good God! I would as soon have a cobra capello for my favourite as have a solicitor!—an attorney, a vile attorney—tied to my establishment! I am the most unfortunate man alive; here for instance, just as I have made myself comfortable and happy, that very moment, for I never have been happy more than a moment since I came to this wretched climate, in comes a lawyer's letter at breakfast-time, and then I'm told that *my*

solicitor is to write an answer, and I pay for both!"

"Have you paid your rent, Banana?" said Ganjam.

"To be sure I have not," replied Banana. "When I took the lodgings, the landlady or her dirty maid, I don't know which, promised that I could have wax candles whenever I wanted them; at the end of the month she brought in a bill for the candles, which never could have been wax, saying, 'they were long sixes,' or some such jargon, and modestly hinting that 'I had seven shillings to pay:' so I told her that until it was sunk in the rent, I would not pay a farthing. Besides, I think it was very ungrateful; more especially as Mrs. Wrathful told me one morning she was rather pressed for money, and I lent her ten pounds, without any note of hand, or bill, or any thing."

"More fool you, Banana; your liberality and your niggardly moments will ruin you. Here you are growling because you fancy you have to pay two-pence for a letter, or seven

shillings for wax candles, and at the same time actually lending, or rather giving, for you will never see it again, ten pounds to a perfect stranger."

"Oh, poor woman!" said Banana, "if she never does pay me, why that won't signify much; but to impose upon me, to steal my coals, my tea and sugar, and then to ask me to pay for her candles, which she had agreed to give me for my rent—I think that is so ungrateful, that I am resolved I will not pay her until she makes the deduction."

"Then you will have an opportunity of reading a lawyer's bill, which will puzzle you more than a plumber's or a coachmaker's in France; and likewise an opportunity of exercising your temper when you pay about 200*l.* for defending seven shillings."

"Well, my dear brother," said Mrs. Ganjam, "I really feel for your situation. You have the temper of an angel in all things which require it; but for these little trifles, which other men would smile at, you would be the best companion in life."

"Dear me," simpered Miss Ganjam, "I think uncle Banana quite perfection; I do so like to hear him complain of his hard fate, whilst poor Robert, who used to be beat by every one, and now sent to sea, never had spirit enough to complain."

"He will require all his spirit to bear the discipline of Ruffle," said Mr. Ganjam; "that fellow would tame an hyena."

"I wish he would tame the attorneys," said Banana, "I declare I never should complain again even of my worst misfortunes, if I could only see one of Ruffle's boatswain's mates making his blood circulate by extracting some drops near the back-bone of this Mr. Noakes. I swear that, in all my life, I never knew any thing so impertinent as this letter, and if I can fight an attorney, I'll call him out."

"Banana," said Mr. Ganjam, "Hudibras says

> 'Where no honour's to be gained,
> 'Tis thrown away in being maintained.'

Pay the man for his letter, the woman for her house, and get lodgings elsewhere; — you can

have Robert's room if you are not afraid of ghosts."

"Pay the attorney!" roared Banana; "never, Ganjam, never! I would sooner ship myself off for Java direct. Ah, that is something like a climate; no rainy days, no cloudy mornings, all is sunshine and liveliness."

"And snakes, and mosquitoes, and fevers, and scorpions, and centipedes, and fleas, flies, bugs, bats, and water-rats," said Ganjam, all in a breath.

"Stop, stop," said Banana, "all the time I resided in Java, which was seventeen years, I never had but one snake in my bed; was only stung twice by the scorpions, and only bit six times by the centipedes."

"And the mosquitoes?" said Ganjam.

"Oh, poor little innocent things, Miss Ganjam, not bigger than a gnat, and *nearly* as harmless; they buzz and bite, but that 's all."

"And quite enough too, I should think," replied Ganjam. "But come, let us hear the whole account of your misery in the house,

how you found out that you were cheated, and why you refused to pay the rent?"

"Oh, that is just the business of five minutes," said Banana, at the same time relinquishing his egg, and pushing the plate a little from him: "why you see the other day I was invited to go down to Prescott's, who lives near Bath, to pass a month or two with him. Prescott is an old friend of mine, and we were in India together. I remember once, when he was sick at Madras, I recommended him to go to the Nielgherries in order to try—

"Our patience, Banana," said Ganjam, "what have India, and Madras, and those cursed mountains, to do with Mrs. Wrathful, Mr. Noakes, and your lodgings: just confine yourself, if you can, to the subject."

"Oh! very well, Ganjam, only keep your temper. Well, I sent my servant to take two places."

"Two places!" said Miss Ganjam: "why who was going with you?"

"Only myself, Miss Jane; but as I hate

being crowded or incommoded, I took the opposite place for my legs. Well, sir, only listen —I really am the most unfortunate man in the world—When I got into the coach, and seated myself in my corner, and was just spreading my cloak to wrap my feet up in, who should come in but an elderly lady, as she was pleased to call herself, and down she sat exactly opposite me, jamming my legs up like an Indian fakir, those men who make vows to ——"

"Tell their stories," said Ganjam, "without wandering. Don't get into India, or it will be four o'clock before you get fairly from the Golden Cross."

"I did not dare say," continued Banana, "that I had taken the place for my legs; but I hinted that the cloak was mine. 'I'm very glad it is yours,' said the old snap-dragon, 'for I was just going to hand it out to the coachman; and pray, sir, have the kindness to take it, for it is very much in my way.' 'I put it,' said I, 'on my place.'—'Then somebody moved it, I suppose,' she replied; at the same time letting down the window, through

which came a breeze as heavy as a monsoon, or one of those squalls in the China seas, called tiffoons."

"Oh!" said Ganjam, "what in China now!"

"No no, Ganjam, only you see it was a thorough draught: for a gentleman who came in wrapped up like a mummy—I could not even see his face—had seated himself by the side of my tormentor, and left the window down; so by way of a hint I took out a silk handkerchief and hung it from my hat to make a veil. The stranger was covered to the very eyes, and I could not make out if he was old or young, or what. 'Are the insides all right?' said the coachman. I trembled at the very indelicacy of the question. 'Oh yes,' answered the porter, the insides is all right, and the gentleman *with the legs* is in.' As this conversation was heard, every one began to look at his neighbour's legs, and the lady, who was opposite me, took the liberty of ascertaining—quite by accident, of course—that mine were actually *bona fide* legs; she felt them as she stooped to find her handkerchief, which was in her reticule on her lap.

We were only three in the coach. The mummy began to elongate his legs in order to feel the lady's. I kept cringing mine close to me, and the lady, rather afraid of her own being felt, kept her's close to mine. A doubt seemed to exist—

"If ever you would finish your story, Banana," said Ganjam. "Upon my soul you would have exhausted the patience of Job himself; here have I been listening for a quarter of an hour to a cock-and-bull story about three insides and one pair of legs."

"Oh dear me, papa, do allow uncle Banana to continue; he is so droll, and tells the story so naturally."

"Oh come, Ganjam, none of your impatience, I beg. The coach soon drove off; the mummy went to sleep, with a north-easter blowing upon all that was visible of him. The lady opposite kept admiring the view, and I, almost petrified, hugged my corner. In this miserable manner we continued, without once exchanging words, until we had passed Reading, when,

finding the cold so intense and the company so silent, I stopped at a small village, and paid my fare. I had just got to the door, when the guard called out, ' That's the gentleman with the legs !' Immediately out popped the heads, and every eye was alive. I ran into a small room, and never felt so pleased as when I heard the coach driving off without me; and since, I have discovered that the mummy was Prescott. I immediately ordered the only post-chaise in the village, and, notwithstanding I was told that, the evening before, two gentlemen had been robbed, and themselves thrown out of their carriage — their mouths stuffed with dirt, and their pockets emptied, I came back to London to my lodgings. To my great astonishment, I found lights in my room, and, to the much greater annoyance of the landlady, I walked in just as she and her friends were sitting down to a snug supper—having before helped themselves to my tea and sugar, intending, as they said, to replace it to-morrow; that is, for Twining's best, filling the

caddy up with hyson mundungo-stuff, sold at three-halfpence a cartload in India for dunnage for the Indiamen, when——"

"O, for God's sake, spare us!" said Ganjam, "and do try to get to the end of your story before midnight."

"Well, the next morning I wrote a letter to Mrs. Wrathful, begging that she would deduct that day from my month, as she had used the apartments; and, seeing my tea not a little diminished, and knowing how dangerous it is in this barbarous country to accuse people of plundering, I wrote upon a small piece of paper, 'Dear me, I wonder who has been taking me away!' and left it on the tea, shutting the caddy carefully, but leaving the key in the lock. She soon came hectoring into the room, and said that I was no gentleman indeed to hint that any one had stolen my tea, and that she was quite astonished I should venture to write to her, a poor lone widow, in the impertinent strain I had done; that I had taken the apartments for a month; that they were up on Christmas-day, and that I should

pay her to the moment. 'Then,' said I, 'that shall be done directly; so, here, take your money, and I am off to-day.'—'That you may do, if you like,' she replied; 'but you shall pay me for another month, because you have not given me notice of your intention to quit.'—'Very well,' said I; 'then I'll stay, and I am much mistaken if you don't get tired of me.' As the best way of disturbing any house, without being indictable for a nuisance, I resolved to take lessons on the violin, and I engaged an old opera performer, a cast-off orchestra-man, to come and give me an hour's quiet practice at eleven o'clock at night, at which hour Mrs. Wrathful generally goes to bed. I began the gamut with such a squeak, and I continued, first my hour—then had tea—then practice—then brandy and water, until about two o'clock. The consequence was, the people on the ground-floor gave warning, the ladies on the second floor gave warning, and now it finishes by the lady giving me warning."

"Is your story at last finished, Banana?

Well, thank God in good earnest! You *are* a living contradiction; you admit that you lent Mrs. Wrathful ten pounds, because she was in distress; and then, two days afterwards, you require her to deduct the price of one day out of a month's rent."

"It matters little," replied Banana; "the whole world are in league against me, and you have joined the numerous host: as such is the case, do what you like about the lodgings, and I will go and seek others."

"Well," said Ganjam, "be it so: leave the attorney to me; I will arrange the business, and you shall never hear of it any more: but, for God's sake, give up the violin, for, of all instruments, none is so hateful to my ears, unless, indeed, touched by a Spagnoletti."

"Ha-ha-ha!" simpered Miss Ganjam, as she shut down the tea-caddy: "I do not know which is the best plan, your's or mine, to detect plunder; I always fill both bottles, and only use one; but the servants take good care to keep them both even, and, therefore, the

only satisfaction I have is, knowing that some one does assist us."

The party broke up, each betaking himself or herself to the occupation of the day. Ganjam retired to his library, for he was a man of sound mind, and knew that life was rendered more agreeable by the wholesome disposition of time; and happy is the man who frees himself from the clog of idleness. Ganjam knew this: his early life had been passed in India; every moment had been occupied, for, when the toils of office were relieved by the relaxation of leisure, that leisure was enhanced by reading. His memory was wonderful; he was a classical scholar, a man devotedly fond of poetry, and could well distinguish between the harmonious numbers of Pope and the gaudy tinsel of Darwin; but, whilst he gave the laurel of English poetry between the former and Dryden, he was by no means insensible to the merit of others. He frequently used to say, "Read, read, my children: no one knows the blessings of such recreations but those who have been left in solitude; for, even in a

desert, a man of a cultivated mind is surrounded in imagination, and the bright ideas of authors long gone rise before him to solace his loneliness, and to bless, even when the living world is dead to him."

This desire of information in accomplished literature had descended to his family: no moments fleeted away in irksome idleness; every minute had its occupation; the days vanished like a dream; and they stood in contradistinction to other families, for time killed them, whereas the others were employed in endeavouring to kill time. But when the evening came, then came cheerfulness, contentment, conversation; music, either vocal or instrumental, filled up the gap, if gap there was, in the lively sallies of the imagination. With this application to studies, the female branch avoided the extreme, and the men neither despised those less advanced than themselves, nor shot the arrows of ridicule at the undefended bosom of the idle.

Miss Ganjam, who is the only one who will occupy any place in these pages, was mildness

personified. She was extensively acquainted with foreign languages. She was musical, she was lively in conversation, but required rather to be drawn out, for she made no ostentatious display of the talents she had laboured to improve. She listened rather than spoke; was contented to believe that men were better calculated to govern a state than women, and had so formed her mind upon Lyttelton's advice to a young lady, that she often confessed herself contented rather to shine in a woman's proper sphere, than, comet-like, to push men from the orbit in which nature had destined them to move. She had one failing in Banana's eyes, and that was, she never could pay attention to any conversation upon stock-jobbing, and literally once so far forgot her usual prudence as to rush to the piano, in preference to listening to a political discussion. Fortunately in this respect she was not much troubled, for Ganjam's whole soul was in his library, and he only read a newspaper to see what opera was to be performed, or if there was any intelligence extracted from the Bengal Hurkara.

Banana's history was as follows. Early in life he had been sent to India, and there joined one of the few houses of agency then existing in that country. His fortune was soon made, and he returned to England, having entirely withdrawn his name from the firm. At the expiration of three years he received the most pressing letters from his old partners, requesting him to return; mentioning that, since his withdrawal, the speculations had not answered, in short that, since his master-hand had retired, the other partners found themselves unable to conduct the business. The letter held out a tempting lure. They promised him eight thousand a year, without any risk of his own property. This last he instantly rejected; but like many men who have returned from that country, where money was dross, to live in England, where the tax-gatherer drained the reduced income, he still saw before him the pleasant scenes of his youth, his increased fortune, and an occupation. He instantly resolved to return, and wrote to that effect, mentioning his intention of following his herald in two or

three months at the farthest. In the mean time, that is, between the arrival of his letter and his appearance, the partners gave out that Mr. Banana, tired of residing in England with so reduced an income, and finding himself but a grain as it were in the mountain, had resolved to return to India and follow his old occupation. His known talents and attention to business soon gave a greater stability to the house. The natives had unbounded confidence in him, for he was a man of the strictest honour and probity; his word was his bond, from which he was never known to deviate, and not unfrequently produce to the amount of seventy thousand pounds had been entrusted to him, without any document having passed between the parties. His departure, like every thing he did, was hurried. He never had sufficiently considered what he had undertaken, and, when he arrived in India, on a close inspection of the accounts, he found the house in a state of insolvency. To have withdrawn instantly would have been to ensure its failure, and Banana had a heart too generous for that,

and a head too clear to consider the business as desperate. He declared himself a partner in the concern, and was seen the next day at the house. He embarked his whole capital, and turned his attention to a speculation in opium with China. He saw the immense profits likely to accrue, and he seized the moment, when the house had recovered stability sufficient to enable him to undertake the voyage, to set the wheels in motion. He went and made his arrangements, and on his return found that one of his partners had retired to England, leaving his brother, a man no way calculated to forward the business, in his stead. In the mean time the senior partner became "righteous over-much." His methodism and his conscience, two things which never troubled him much before, now began to assume some sway over him. He calculated that at the moment, if every creditor came for his own, some would be deficient. He thought he was acting dishonestly in continuing to receive when he had not enough to pay; and, in the terror of conscience, he betrayed the secret of the cir-

cumstances of the house, under a most sacred promise, of course, that it should be a secret. No one keeps a secret. We always manage to hint that we know something. Curiosity probes to find it out, and not unfrequently succeeds. A drunkard should never be trusted. Who knows not the old saying "in vino veritas." A man might as well expect to walk the first time of trial in security on stilts, over smooth ice, as for a drunkard to be consistent. If the partner, like young ladies who first have particular proposals made to them, told one and then another of his sex, we know not; but the secret did escape. The buzz of uncertainty only rendered the concern open to more conjecture and comment; and one fine morning, when Banana went to the house, he found the different clerks and people connected with the establishment waiting for admission. His surprise was great when he heard from strangers that the house had failed. He never had been apprised of the religious man's intention, and in the midst of his most flattering dreams as to the realization of property by the speculation before re-

ferred to, he found himself a bankrupt; his every farthing gone; his years of toil and honesty useless; his time, his fortune, and, by some, his reputation lost. In vain he challenged scrutiny; it is needless when once the docket is struck. A banker's establishment, like a woman's virtue, is ruined, if it is suspected. Cæsar's wife and the assets of the house must be beyond suspicion. Banana was ruined in all but energy and health. The accounts were wound up, the certificate was granted, and our curious friend had once more to begin life. His mercantile knowledge soon got him employment. By degrees he worked up the hill until he found himself sufficiently strong to settle in Java. His honesty, his probity, his candour, were proverbial. He soon began to grow great in the world's eye, and in ten years time he had become an affluent man. Knowing the changes and chances of this mortal life, he resolved not to give fortune an opportunity of playing him any more tricks. He remitted his wealth in produce to England, and embarked on board a ship called the Frederick, to return

to his native island. The ship sailed from Samarang, and was to touch at Batavia. On her passage, Banana found his mind oppressed with some uncommon presages of a dismal kind. His produce had sailed long before him in other ships. He felt uneasy, and heard the warning voice of fate in his dreams. Startled at the frequent repetition of his nightly fears, he left the Frederick on her arrival at Batavia, and shipped himself on board of another vessel. He sailed, arrived safely in Portsmouth; but from that day to this the Frederick has never been heard of. It is supposed that she either upset, for she was a crank ship, or that she foundered. Years have now elapsed, the insurance has been paid, but no intelligence has whispered the fate of the unfortunate ship. Banana, when agitated by some imaginary misfortune, frequently says: "I am the most unfortunate man in the world, or I should have sunk with the Frederick."

CHAPTER IV.

"The gathered guilt of elder times
Shall reproduce itself in crimes;
There is a day of vengeance still—
Linger it may, but come it will."

THE gale which blew the Saturn out of sight as she chased the privateer, forwarded the Rapid towards her destination. I do not here, or anywhere else, intend to give a catalogue of my sufferings; few can imagine, who have not experienced, the sensation of despondency which creeps over the mind when one feels a degradation and is unable to resent it; when a man of spirit and education becomes the slave of the worthless and the ignorant; when the hand of power is stayed by the supe-

riority of numbers, or by the combination of insignificancy.

The lowest drudgery which ever disgraced the union of all the domestic classes fell upon me. But this was not my only suffering: I had to learn my calling, I had to become a sailor; I had to face the danger which was held too perilous for others; for when, from neglect or from caprice, the top-gallant yards were kept aloft until it was unsafe to despatch *a man* to unbend the gear, in order to send them down, it was invariably "Here you, Ganjam, trot up like a monkey, and look sharp and stop the yard rope out." On me fell all the work of the light sails; and, unfortunately, I was, with the exception of the Captain's son, the only boy on board. Night or day I knew no comfort or positive repose. Some scanty articles of dress had been given to me; I scrubbed my own clothes; I learned the inutility of opposition, when the opposition must be useless, and I was starved-out of all courage to resist. True it is, that hunger would tame a lion, but it is by the exhaustion it occasions.

In ten days we were abreast of Gibraltar, but far to the westward of it; yet still we continued running to the southward. It was evident our destination was not Smyrna. We passed Madeira, making the land, and steered for Teneriffe; as soon as we saw the Peak another course was shaped, so as to pass to the eastward of the Cape Verd Islands; we were in the trade winds, and, after running about a fortnight we came into what the sailors called the Dolderums. The Dolderums are those very light flaws of wind which occur between the two trade winds, the one to the northward, the other to the southward of the Line, and no one can fancy the annoyance of being baked under the equator for days and days, on short allowance of water, broiled almost to suffocation, with the air, when it does come, as heated as if it came through an oven.

The ship's company amounted to twenty-five men in all, and they were now turned to work at the cargo, which consisted of fire-arms, swords, &c.; we had, besides, a great quantity of gunpowder. Our days in the Dolderums

were spent in polishing musket-barrels, and arranging the hold for the reception of slaves. They, poor fellows, required not much labour from us; the only thing we did was to run a long piece of stout wood fore and aft the hatchways on each side of the orlop-deck; and, by the time we anchored in Loango, the mart of slavery, we were ready to receive our cargo.

The barter for these live logs of mahogany, as they are called, was soon concluded, our muskets and powder were landed, and some cases of imitation-pearl beads were handed over to the merchants of human flesh, which attracted more attention than the more useful articles above alluded to. The women seemed enraptured with the ornaments, and, not unfrequently, a female, in all but positive nudity, could be seen with a profusion of necklaces and armlets, exhibiting herself to her very great satisfaction before our ship's company. We were to have on board three hundred of these poor miserable creatures, and to run

with our living cargo to the Havannah; we were told that they were within a few miles, and the ship was put into requisite order for their reception.

In the course of a week our live lumber were shipped; they were driven to the boats, each man having his left shackled to another man's right leg: they were thin, depressed and sulky, yet tractable. They had been driven from the interior some hundreds of miles, and the irons had in many cases worked through the skin and produced angry and dangerous sores.

But the inflexible cruelty of the owners never for a moment relaxed. To them time was money; they knew nearly to a day when ships for human victims would be at Loango, and they hurried along the healthy and the sickly, the sound and the wounded, the fresh and the jaded, at the same remorseless rate. They were all naked—not even the slightest covering to their emaciated limbs, and their food was scanty and precarious.

To such an absolute drug is human life reduced on this barbarous coast, that, when the British legislature endeavoured to drop the shackle of tyranny from the limbs of the slave, the owners of this (by us thought illegal) property, finding that our ships and those of Spain did not arrive for the accumulated cargoes, rather than return them to the place whence they came, or run the risk of liberating the poor negroes, or be at the very trifling expense of their food and their security, actually murdered — yes, cruelly, wantonly murdered the slaves, and left their bones piled in heaps as the memorial of their infamy and the record of the deed! Men and women, the aged and the infant, the sickly and the healthy, were all murdered!

Whilst the English nation were with the best of feelings extolling the Christian-like conduct of Mr. Wilberforce, and lighting an eternal halo of glory round his head, they little thought that the consequences of their voted liberty would be to ensure so long a release

from slavery by sending such numbers to that place* "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Amongst our cargo of three hundred, there were fifty women, or rather females; of these fifty, about thirty were between the ages of twelve and twenty. At the former age the sex are women, and at the latter they are verging on towards the down-hill of life—that is, as far as personal charms are concerned. I soon found that these victims were destined to experience all the brutal assaults of the sailors. The Captain selected a very young and a very well-formed creature for his occasional companion; she was soon dismissed, and he chose another: and the sailors, as either passion or caprice suggested, changed the objects of their temporary affections. The men were confined below, a kind of landing of planks having been placed so as to enable them to lie down at

* His Majesty's ship Primrose was sent to Loango, to endeavour to stop the trade, and her officers saw the piles of human bones, and were told the circumstance and the reason of the murders.

discretion, without having their limbs hurt by the inequalities of the hold. They seemed indifferent as to pain, and, when released in order to benefit by the air, they looked about in stupid astonishment: even the working of the ship, when we put to sea, excited no surprise; they were sick, and, like other people in sea-sickness, seemed to be above all care. Not so the women; they soon became gay, and apparently satisfied.

This promiscuous society was not denied to the Captain's son: his inherent disposition to tyranny had full scope; his amusement was to pull the little girl's curly hair, and make remarks upon her different intonations of voice as he either gently extracted two or three at a time, or forcibly possessed himself of a handful. They kindly offered me one of these purchased victims, but I civilly declined so handsome a proposition.

We put to sea as soon as a sufficient quantity of provisions was procured for our live stock, and stood to the northward of the equator, in

order to take the trade wind. The women were now more engaging, inasmuch as they were dressed:—if we had continued in the fashionahle garb of Eden, I doubt if one-half the crime would ever have been committed of which we daily and nightly hear. When curiosity cannot be excited, we are shortly satiated.

I had double allowance of work; I had two ladies and two gentlemen to attend upon, and the ladies, from awkwardness in managing either forks or spoons, gave me quite sufficient employment, especially in the vicinity of the equator. We had been at sea about eight days, when a man, who had been sent aloft to repair the clew of the fore top-gallant sail, called out,

"On deck, there!"

"Halloo!" was responded by the mate

"Here's a strange sail about three points on the lee-bow."

The Captain was instantly on deck, and, taking a glass in his hand, he jumped aloft in

the fore-topsail yard: for a few minutes he seemed undecided. We were on the larboard tack close-hauled, and the stranger, whose canvass had a large spread, and whose yards were very square, was standing on the starboard tack under easy sail. The wind was light and variable, and our royals only were asleep; indeed the motion of the ship slightly discomposed their slumbers.

Whilst the Captain endeavoured to make out the stranger, a degree of curiosity and fear was discernible in the crew, but when, after a short pause, he called out, "There go her royals aloft!" it required no one to call the ship's company into activity. "Down with the helm!" said the Captain, and in a very short space of time we were standing on the same tack as the stranger, with every stitch of sail the Rapid could show. We were not long in discovering that the vessel astern was in chase of us; she was soon under skysails, and rose us a little. If ever the Rapid could have escaped it, was now; she was not deep in the water, and we had rather a better air than

our rival, for our skysails drew well, and we were going about three knots through the water, a rate which we scarcely thought possible to be effected by the other vessel. Whilst every man on board imagined the ship gained upon us, I alone thought the contrary: the fact was, they dreaded the reality, I hoped it. It was however evident that, allowing the breeze to continue as it did, we could not be boarded before ten o'clock at night, even if we hove-to: the Captain therefore gained confidence in the assurance that darkness would befriend him, more especially as the moon did not rise until eleven o'clock, and generally after sunset the breeze freshened.

As pirates were as common as English men-of-war on the coast, Captain Smith began to make preparations for the worst. We had eight guns, and were well fitted, in every respect, either to fight or to run away. Skreens were nailed up, in order to prevent the sparks from the firing getting below. The hatches were placed, and all precautions taken to hinder the slaves from being troublesome during the ac-

tion; but it always occurred to me that, if the hatches were battened down, a lingering suffocation must have ensued. The women, who, with feminine curiosity, had watched the countenances of the sailors, as they spoke of the probable result, and who began to be troublesome, as all curious people must be, were confined on the foremost part of the lower deck, and were told to keep quiet—a very useless order, which Nature seemed to have privileged women to disobey. No monkeys in their wildest state ever chattered more rapidly than did these poor creatures when they were placed in confinement, and when no satisfactory reason could be given for such thraldom. But negroes are unlike other men; they bear misfortune's worst pinch without complaining; and, as from their births they have been slaves, one to another—the worst of all slavery—they only consider a relaxation from labour a pleasure, and therefore, when the women found that they could lie down and sleep, they soon forgot their grievances, and did, quite unintentionally, as they were desired.

It was four o'clock in the evening; the wind had freshened a little, and the Rapid was going about four knots, when the Captain observed that the stranger evidently lost ground; and he ordered, as we had a fresher breeze, that the helmsman should keep the ship a point and half free, in order to gain a greater distance from our pursuer before dark. The fore top-mast and the top-gallant studdings were instantly set, and, by seven o'clock, when the day began to draw towards a close, the stranger's top-sail yards were hardly discernible from the deck. A smile of contentment played over the rugged features of the sailors, when darkness followed, and we lost sight of our unwelcome neighbour.

Half an hour after the night had established itself, the studdings were hauled down, the Rapid brought close to the wind, and tacked. I overheard the Captain say to the mate that the stranger was an English sloop of war, and that in all probability she would, seeing that her chase had set her studding-sails before dark, imagine that it was our intention to

bear up, and perhaps do the same herself, taking the chance of cutting us off. In the mean time the wind freshened, our sails were proportionably reduced, and the Rapid was striding along at a considerably increased pace. At eleven o'clock the hands were turned up to shorten sail, and every stitch of canvass was taken off the brig and furled ; every light was extinguished, even to the binnacle, and the Captain with his night-glass, and the mate with a looking-glass, kept sweeping the horizon to leeward. About one o'clock, the Captain thought he saw a vessel on the lee-beam ; but in spite of every endeavour he could not again catch her. At two o'clock we made sail, and crowded on all we could bear, keeping her two points free : the wind was now fresh, and the sea began to get up a little.

A very considerable anxiety was manifested as it drew towards day-light ; men were placed on each top-gallant yard, and warned, as the day broke, to keep a good look-out all round. The Captain was on deck ; indeed he had never been below, and the mate, who had rolled him-

self in a sail abaft, came from his roosting-place as the light grew stronger.

"Main top-gallant yard there!" said the Captain.

"Sir," was answered.

"Look well round on each quarter, and keep a good look-out."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Do you see any thing from the fore top-gallant yard?" asked the mate.

"Nothing, sir, nothing."

"Look well down to leeward about in the direction of that small cloud."

The man turned his head in that direction, but replied, that "he could not see any thing like a strange sail."

It was far from a clear morning; on both quarters the clouds were heavy, and the weather all around indicated our approach into the trade winds again. Day-light was fairly established; the stranger was not in sight; and the Captain had given directions to shape a course he had previously steered before the chase commenced; when the man on the main

top-gallant yard called out, that "there was a vessel on the weather quarter." At this moment, a thick cloud, which had settled apparently on the water, rose like the curtain of a theatre, and a ship was seen standing as it were out of the fog: — she was on the same tack and steering the same course as ourselves, both vessels having the wind on the larboard beam. The stranger was about ten miles distant; her lower yards were plainly visible; and when she rose to the sea, we could distinguish below the reef-points of her courses.

"It is the same," said the Captain; "make all sail, my lads; we have nothing left for it now but our legs."

"I thought," said the mate, as he came aft when the sails were all set, "I thought he would play us that trick; when first he saw us, we were steering this course, and when it came dark, he either shortened sail, or after standing on two hours he tacked, and kept a little free. There goes his studding-sails," he continued, as he looked through the glass; "she looks large enough to be a frigate."

"She looks larger than she is," replied the Captain, "but, frigate or no frigate, she is quite large enough to walk off with us: keep the men quite quiet, and make all the slaves lie down. Do you think, mate, we are in good trim?"

"Pretty fair, sir; but perhaps if we bring her a little more by the stern, she might do better."

"Then we will wait and see," replied the Captain; "but send a hand aloft, and clap a preventer main top-sail brace on: we must hold on if it blows great guns and small arms; and I am mistaken if we don't give him a good long chase before he overhauls us entirely."

The captain's black wife and Master Smith's black mistress did not appear at breakfast. In short, I had nearly a holiday; for, as the order was to keep every one quiet and below, I took the liberty of obeying it strictly.

By eleven o'clock the stranger was hull-up. She gained upon us rapidly, and, although the

Rapid was going nine-and-a-half, the decreased distance seemed visible every half-hour.

We now edged away about a point, and began to lighten the vessel; the guns were thrown overboard, to my great satisfaction, and some useless lumber soon floated away astern. It was now a doubt if the stranger gained upon us; a stern-chase is always a long one, and by the edging away above-mentioned she was directly in our wake.

At noon the breeze moderated a little, but still the stranger evidently neared us. She was under all sail she could crowd, and we could distinctly see the water as it broke upon her bows. I was in ecstasies. Every time I looked I saw my deliverer closer and closer, and began to think that Fortune, having tamed me into subjection, by having placed me as cabin-boy, was now inclined to turn her wheel in my favour.

Captain Smith was one of the most fearless, heartless men the world ever saw. He was desperately brave, and always foremost in any danger or difficulty; his crew knew him well,

and, like all seamen, they overlooked his bad qualities in remembering his courage. He was by no means an idle man; he was always employed about something useful: he did not trust the mate with the navigation; he was his own captain, master, and boatswain, and never sent a man where he feared to go himself; but now, all the devil of his composition came to light. The stranger gained upon us. She was not more than two gun-shots distant; the breeze seemed to favour her in strength; in short, four hours more would have seen the Rapid a prize, had not something been done—that something was now about to be tried. The mate and captain were in earnest conversation abaft, the lightning of the latter's eye seemed to dazzle the mate into subjection; but still there was a reluctance about the countenance of the mate which would not entirely yield. I heard him say, "But if we are taken, after doing it, what will become of us all? We shall be hung, sir, we shall be hung." I certainly could not help saying to myself, "Please God and a strong rope."

"It is a chance, and the only chance," said the Captain, "and no one will care a pin about the business if we get away."

"Oh yes," said the mate, "if we could only get away. Why, to be sure, I should not be so slack in stays myself, but that confounded vessel sails well, and we are evidently losing ground fast."

"Well," said Smith, "let the worst be the worst, that is our capture and the fore-yard arm. I will be responsible since you fear, and seeing, as I do, that the taking of the Rapid is at once the downfall of myself and family, I am resolved to have one chance more of escape. If we can go on until night, the frequent squalls may allow us to try another manœuvre, which may prove more fortunate than our last; and if the bait does not tempt sufficiently, why we are only saving one or two human beings from a life of misery."

"Well," said the mate, "I'm agreed.—Forward there," said he.

"Sir," answered a rough-looking fellow.

"Jump down," said the Captain, "and hoist

up one or two empty casks, and send the cooper aft with his tools."

"Ay, ay, sir," responded a man with all the indifference of a sailor.

The cooper soon made his appearance; in five minutes the empty casks were on deck, the heads of both were taken out, and the cooper set to work to cut out a circle large enough for a man's neck. The mate, who was a handy fellow of all work, began at one cask, and the captain stood by, urging the workmen to use every despatch. The breeze had freshened, and we held our own pretty well with the stranger; at any rate I was fearful that she did not gain upon us very rapidly. In the mean time, both cooper and assistant worked away with the greatest indifference, and no human eye could have detected the slightest variation of countenance in the mate, although he was fully aware of the desperate act about to be committed. When the casks were ready, the upper hoops were taken off, so as to allow the cooper to place the heads in when required. A pig of iron ballast was fastened in each cask,

and then it was that the mate said in a firm voice :—

" Now, sir, we are ready. If you are still determined, d—n me if you shall ever say that John Collins was afraid when death was at hand."

The captain's son had been all along watching the movements of the cooper, but was quite in ignorance of the intention of his father. Once indeed he asked what was the hole cut in the head of the cask for; but he was told to be silent, in a tone of voice which set me shaking like a monkey in frosty weather.

" Bring one of the slaves upon deck," said the captain ; " and, do you hear ? pick out a lively and a slim one."

The slave was brought unshackled upon deck : he looked round him with surprise, and yet with indifference ; his eye was sunken from care and from sickness, and his poor emaciated form had qualified him to come forward in the capacity alluded to.

" He's the liveliest we can find, sir," said one of the seamen ; " for he was the only one

who was talking, and I fancy he is as slim as any of the rest; but for that matter we shall have no trouble to find another."

By this time, about ten of the crew had assembled about the mainmast, curious to see what was to be done. The slave was told by signs to get into the cask, which he endeavoured to do; but he was so long in the limbs that he could not sit down in the bottom as he was desired. To effect this a little manual labour was applied by the bystanders, but ineffectually; for the slave was so stiff from the exertion of walking, and from the hardness of his resting-place, that the attempt was abandoned.

"Oh," said young Smith, "if you want a person to get into the cask, try young Ganjam. He is small enough, and supple enough, or else I have worn my colt out to no purpose."

The mate looked at the captain. The eye spoke volumes; and little did I know at that moment that my life was hanging on the thin thread of Captain Smith's conscience.

In the mean time young Smith had seized

me by the collar of the shirt, and had placed me by the side of the cask. The mate looked at me, as if measuring my height, and then at the captain, signifying by his glance that I should do very well; and said he,

"White might be more sure than black. Here, youngster, jump in here, and let us see how tall you are."

Not knowing and not imagining the intention, I got into the cask, and by means of much exertion I sat down exactly as was required, my neck just coming in a line with the mark for the head of the cask. Even the sailors, who up to that moment had no idea of the captain's intentions, grinned and said that I was made for the cask, and sat in it as snug as any lady who ever was hoisted in. That remark saved my life.

Captain Smith, who seemed absorbed in thought, and who looked like a man screwing up his courage to desperation, suddenly broke his long silence, and merely said:

"No, no! not him."

"Oh then," said his son, "try my black wife."

"Ah!" ejaculated the Captain.

"That would do just as well," said the mate; "so bring her aft, here; you 're not the first in the world who would like to get so sure a divorce."

Away went that incarnate devil, and in two minutes he was seen lugging along his miserable victim by the hair of the head: one or two more of that sex came on deck, but were instantly sent below again.

"Here, you Ganjam, jump in the cask, and show this young lady how she is to sit, for none but the devil can talk the negro language."

I did as I was desired, and then got out again. The girl was then told to do as I had done; but she hesitated, as if warned by some unseen power of the danger which awaited her. As she could not succeed the first time, I was desired to place her properly, which I did. The cooper was told

to fix the head in, fitting the part about her neck.

"Come, down with you," said the mate; "now, cooper, fix on her necklace, and take care it does not fit too tight, for she is going into strange company."

The remorse of conscience which had at first exhibited itself in this worthy associate of the Captain's, had entirely vanished: like many others who, having made one false step, from that instant fly to the other extreme. Thus we not unfrequently see women whose virtues have been sacrificed suddenly assume the open countenance of vice, and, from being modest and reserved, become shameless and impudent.

The last stroke of the mallet had driven home the upper hoop of the cask; the poor girl, who imagined, perhaps, that some kind of amusement was to follow, kept laughing and smiling, and vainly endeavoured to make us understand her delight, as she poured forth a volume of words. The Captain had walked

aft and called the mate: the stranger had evidently gained so much, that in two hours she would have had us under her guns; and, after remarking this aloud, the former said, "Well, it is our only alternative; but, used as I am to scenes of horror, I cannot bear to see a person smile, when such a chance awaits them."

"The stranger," said the master, "is right astern, and it is impossible for them not to see the cask; now let us see if *their* Christian charity can overcome their love of prize-money. If you intend to do it, we have no time to lose."

"Do it!" said the Captain.

The mate walked to the gangway, and cut the cask close to the side. It was now that the poor imprisoned wretch imagined her destiny; she gave a shriek so loud and piercing, that every slave below startled at the sound, and, ere she could continue her loud cry for mercy, the mate and one of the seamen had lifted the cask clear of the side, and, vibrating it once

and twice, the third time they relinquished their grasp, and the poor creature, who had been sold to enrich others, now found herself the victim for their security.

The cask,* when it fell into the water, twirled round and round with fearful rapidity, but, owing to the ballast, it always kept end up, leaving the girl's head plainly visible. Her eye, whenever the twirl of the cask allowed it to rest on the ship, had more of imploring mercy than the words of the most frightened convict; she screamed for pity — alas! pity was not known to those who had purchased her life; — flight, safety, was the only thought which occupied her half-murderer's mind. The freshness of the breeze, the noise occasioned by the rapidity of the vessel's way, soon predominated, and the shriek of the negro girl was lost in the distance. The eyes of the crew now rested on the cask: the Cap-

* The whole of the following story is founded on fact. It was H.M.S. the Eden, I believe, that picked up the negroes turned adrift as is related.

tain kept his glass steadily fixed on what the mate called the water-nymph, and a quarter of an hour would decide the fate of the girl, the Rapid, and the Captain. Then was conjecture at its utmost. The cask, being small, appeared at a greater distance than the stranger, and as, from the slight variation in steering, and the send of the sea, the cask was to leeward of the vessel, it was imagined that either the negress had passed unseen, or was left to inevitable death, the spirit of gain having predominated over the spirit of charity. But it was only the fears of the villains which could have harboured such an idea; for sailors are generally the most humane beings alive, and, when a woman is concerned, they would risk more than almost any of the biped race.

Whilst the mate was cursing the unsuccessful scheme, and the Captain was meditating some further rascality, the royals, courses, and flying-jib of the stranger were suddenly seen shaking, and then instantaneously reduced; the

ship was brought to the wind and hove-to, and the lee-quarter boat was lowered. Then it was, for the first time, that we made out our pursuer to be an English sloop-of-war, for she hoisted her colours, perhaps to inspire courage in the negress, or to make her understand that she was discovered.

"There 's shorten sail and heave-to," said the mate, jumping at the same time in ecstasies; "we are safe now: let 's send adrift another directly; it will take her ten minutes, at least before blacky and the boat are hoisted up, and in this way we can continue to regain our lost ground until dark.

"Hand up a live log for a swim," said another of the crew; they all saw their safety secured by the plan; another victim, a small man, was consigned to the waves. Two more casks were brought up and got ready, and it was determined to continue launching one at a time until sunset. The manifest indifference of the negroes, and their little attempt at resistance, was quite wonderful; only in one case out of eight did the mate find any opposition, and

that was but momentary. The black looked round for his companions who had been brought up before him, and it was supposed that in his search he saw the cask which was occupied by a victim floating astern ; but, the instant he became violent, they seized him, lashed his hands behind him, and, by way of giving him consolation, threw two overboard together, one close by the side of the other.

The distance gained by this plan was immense ; it was calculated that we had dropped the sloop about six miles, for she saw every cask and hove-to to pick it up, and then made all sail again ; but, although she must have steered latterly close to the negro, and had her boat ready, and her hands on deck, yet she never was fairly in pursuit again under ten minutes or a quarter of an hour.

The night was now fast approaching, already the stranger was scarcely visible, and every preparation was made to effect another manœuvre. the wind came in squalls of rain, which generally lasted about twenty minutes, and then was followed by a lull, or a partial cessation of

wind. No sooner had we lost sight entirely of the sloop, than the studding-sail booms were rigged out, the studding-sails hoisted on the yards, and when the next squall of wind and rain came, we bore up right before it, set every inch of canvass we could carry, extinguished all lights, and made the vessel as light as possible by again throwing over some ballast.

The Captain had well judged his time. Fortune, they say, favours the brave; she not unfrequently favours the villain; and the devil, who must be one of Fortune's chief mates upon some occasions, as Lord Byron says,

> ——— "Very often waits,
> And leaves old sinners to be young one's baits."

On this occasion never was fortune so conspicuous; the squall lasted for more than an hour, and, when the wind abated, a thick drizzly rain continued until two o'clock in the morning. We had been running eight knots an hour, and we bore up at nine o'clock, so that we were forty miles from the parallel on which we had been sailing. When the weather cleared up, we could not distinguish any stranger, but

we still continued carrying all sail right before the breeze until daylight.

The day broke beautifully clear, and scarcely had the first streak of light exhibited itself on a small cloud above the horizon, when the sun seemed to follow. Far as the eye could reach no object was visible, the horizon was without a speck which a telescope could enlarge into a ship; but the dreary waste of waters was a paradise to the Captain, who now found himself, by the lucky thought of an attempted murder, free from the Admiralty-court and the sloop-of-war. But Fortune was not always in so kind a mood as she had been; to me she was ever an enemy, for whenever she smiled upon my tyrants she frowned upon me.

Although the rankest villany may sometimes prosper, although the perjurer, the thief, nay, the murderer, may escape, yet the hounds of justice, though slow, are generally sure; and if they are at fault, the wretch who has borne about him an eternal hell, and who, perhaps, dies unsuspected in his bed, having cheated the gallows, suffers ten thousand times more from

the fierce attacks of conscience and of fear, than if the law had received its due, and the hootings of an enraged populace had been the last sound which greeted the dying ear. It was said by a celebrated forger, perhaps the most successful in his trade, that the happiest moment of his life was when the officers of justice arrested him: therefore, let no one think that the man who is known to be a villain, although by the base perjuries of others he escaped in his guilt, is happy; nor let any one envy him, whose riches are the result of extortionate gain, or his wealth been procured by illicit and illegal practices.

The time was not far distant when I was to be an eye-witness that heartless villany and rapacity unman the heart, and make a man a coward; that event, the awful retribution of Providence, shall occupy another chapter. In the mean time, we must be left on the calm waters, for, by running so far to the southward, we had again run out of the Trades and were in the Dolderums.

CHAPTER V.

Shylock.—When it is paid according to the tenor,
It doth appear, you are a worthy judge;
You know the law, your exposition
Has been most sound.

Merchant of Venice.

BANANA'S heart sank within him when he found he could get no satisfaction for the impertinent intrusion of Mr. Noakes; for Banana hated every attorney with a hate only known by those who have been the victims of their base plunder. He considered them as so many hawks ready to pounce upon their prey, who never had any thought but of their six-and-eightpenny charges, and who cared for nothing but the prospect of a law-suit, with the regular gradations from the original writ, through the

phalanx of plunder, under the heads of arrest—declaration—pleadings—issue—verdict—judgment—execution, and *costs!* Under this feeling of abhorrence to the land-sharks, he most carefully avoided any act likely to bring him under the hands of his enemies; and it was for this reason that he never would embark a farthing of his property in either lands or tenements, for then some lawyers, some conveyancers, and some wormwood, that is, attorneys, must have made a profit out of his bargain. "No, no," said Banana, "let me have my money in the funds, and then I have no tithes to go to law about, no damages of hedges and ditches to be made good, no tax-gatherer, and no attorneys —d—n them! I should," said the irritable gentleman, "once have bought a place which I much coveted, because a favourite sister resided there for many years, and I went down actually to purchase it. I dined with some of my neighbours, and, after an animated discourse upon Swedish turnips and mangel-wurzel, the conversation turned upon a law-suit then pending between my host and one of his neighbours,

from which it appeared that a cow belonging to my friend had strayed upon the ground of his neighbour. The cow had done some very trifling damage, and the neighbour, who was one of those thorns which sometimes flourish to the destruction of every flower about them, determined to go to law to recover about eight times the amount of damages actually sustained. The attorney, who sat by his side, and who professed to be an honest man, advised my host by all means to defend the action, because of the uncertainty of the law, and likewise of the difficulty of swearing to the trespasser. 'But,' said he, 'I am bound as a lawyer and as an *honest man* to tell you, 'that a person is answerable not only for his own trespass, but that of his cattle; for if by negligent keeping they stray upon the land of another and tread down the herbage, or commit other injury, this is a trespass, for which the owner must answer in damages.' Must he? said I, then good night, my worthy sir. I would rather live in the Deccan than amongst such gentlemen; and I came to town the next day."

Banana being ejected from his snug rooms in Half-moon-street, resolved to move a little farther off from Ganjam, and accordingly he began to search about in the vicinity of Baker-street. He was not long in finding some rooms exactly suited to his taste and his price, and he actually had agreed to take them, when one of the unfortunate gentleman's whims drove him out again to search for quarters.

"Very nice lodgings," said Banana, "very nice indeed: what is your rent, Mrs. Morris?"

"We generally," answered Mrs. Morris, "ask two guineas and a half; but as you are a single gentleman, without any incumbrances, we shall only take two guineas of you."

"I really am very much obliged to you, Mrs. Morris, but I am not in the habit of giving less than the thing is worth, and I happen to have some incumbrances."

"Dear me, I beg your pardon," said Mrs. Morris, "I thought you said you had no servants, or wife, or children."

"None, none," ejaculated Banana; "none, thank God, excepting one of the latter, which

is in the Foundling. I meant, by incumbrances, luggage—trunks, fiddle-cases."

"Oh, sir," said Mrs. Morris, dropping a curtsey, "we call those things furniture; we only call women and children incumbrances, because they are always in the way."

"Well, Mrs. Morris, I suppose," said Banana, "we are quite agreed as to the terms: you can cook a beef-steak for me, eh? or boil a potato if requisite, eh?"

"Happy, sir, I am sure to do everything for you in my power; you won't find this side of the street too hot, I think, sir."

"No fear of that, Mrs. Morris; I am just come from the most delightful country in the whole world, where we have every amusement and luxury; where the sun always shines; the weather is always fine; and when we find ourselves inclined to sleep, we have people about us to make us fall into that happy state immediately."

"Dear me, sir," said Mrs. Morris, "I 'm sure I beg your pardon, but I should think

that the fewer people you had about you, the easier it would be to sleep."

"Quite a mistake," said Banana, "quite a mistake, Mrs Morris; if you will just lie down upon that sofa for a few moments, I will show you how we manage to set a person to sleep."

Mrs. Morris's maidenly manners were a little startled at this proposition of my uncle Banana's, and she said, "I think, sir, if you were to lie down yourself, you would be able to show me just as well."

"Just as well," said Banana, "just as well, Mrs. Morris. Look here," said he, throwing himself upon the sofa; "now you must come and press your hands gently all over me."

"Good God! sir," cried Mrs. Morris, "what do you take me for?"

"Why, for a woman, to be sure," said Banana, taking hold of her hand, and pressing it to his leg; "there, Mrs. Morris, in this manner; it is the most delightful sensation in life."

" For shame, sir !" said Mrs. Morris, blushing a deep scarlet ; " I really wonder you are not ashamed."

" Ashamed !" said Banana, starting up, " why, d—n it, Madam, I only wanted you to shampoo me."

" Sham what, sir ?" replied Mrs. Morris ; " I wonder what kind of name that is indeed !" and, bouncing out of the door, she continued —" Sham-poh, indeed ! sham-poh ! I wish my brother was at home—sham-poh !"

Out came Banana, trailing behind an old cotton umbrella, which he had caught up by mistake, and which Mrs. Morris very shortly missed, and espied forming my uncle's tail : down stairs she came, foaming at the mouth, and, rushing into the street, ran up to my uncle. " For shame, sir, for shame, to insult an elderly woman like me, and then to take my umbrella !"

Banana dropped it, as briskly as a boy does a hot potato. " D—n your umbrella, Ma'am," said he.

"Ah, very pretty manners indeed, sir!" said Mrs. Morris, whose active tongue began to exercise itself with greater rapidity; "very pretty manners, sir, for a man of your age to come into an honest woman's house to pretend to take her apartments, to insult her, to want to sham-poh her, and then to take her umbrella, and then to d—n her; I 'd sham-poh you, if I was a man, that I would."

Banana heard no more of the thunder of the tongue, or "of the tell-tale woman railing at the Lord's anointed." Away he ran as hard as he could; and, in no very quiet humour, and none the cooler for the rating and the run, he arrived at Ganjam's house. He rapped as lustily as if the bailiffs were after him and in sight; and had hardly permitted himself time to comb his hair, a service he never allowed to escape if he had one unperceived moment, when he darted into the drawing-room. It was four o'clock in the afternoon, nearly dark, and Ganjam was sitting by the fire-side alone, Mrs. and Miss Ganjam not having returned from their shopping excursion.

"Ah, Banana, how are you? what brought you here so early?"

"My legs," retorted Banana, "and I should have been here ten minutes sooner if they could have conveyed me more quickly. Oh! what an unfortunate man I am! I never know a moment's peace. Here have I been nearly mobbed and pumped upon, hooted and abused, for merely showing an old weather-beaten, wrinkled hag how to shampoo a gentleman. Why are people such barbarians in this enlightened country as not to know what shampooing a gentleman is? O that I were back again in Java! Here's a precious climate, dark as night at half-past four o'clock, with a fog rising enough to suffocate a Mexican: any man who ever lived on a mountain could not inhale this cursed yellow stuff one sips in under the general denomination of air."

"I have got something else for you to sip in, Banana," said Ganjam, with the most provoking coolness, "something that must please you even more than Madeira; but, for fear of driving you quite mad, I shall keep back the

nuisance until after dinner. By the by, Banana, I feel very uneasy about my son Robert; it is now ten days since he left us, I have not had a letter from either Ruffle or himself, and I saw by the papers that the Saturn sailed before he could possibly have arrived at Plymouth."

"Of course," said Banana, "nothing ever goes right in this villanous country: the boy was suffocated in the coach, or has been kidnapped on board a collier, or perhaps is drowned or upset, or living, as midshipmen generally do, with half-a-dozen companions of another sex."

"Job's comforter with a vengeance!" sighed Ganjam; "but I shall have my turn after dinner, and I promise you I will repay you in your own coin."

At this moment Mrs. and Miss Ganjam entered the room, and, after the usual salutation to Banana, for he was much too punctilious to address familiarly even his own sister, Mrs. Ganjam entered upon the subject nearest her heart,—her son.

"I am glad to say," she began, "that the evening papers announce the arrival of the Saturn at Plymouth, having been forced in by stress of weather. To-morrow we shall get some intelligence, for Ruffle never failed to write on his arrival, and now he will be doubly inclined to correspond.

"He is a sound-hearted sailor," said Ganjam; "I have known him all his life; he never has forgotten some trifling civilities I showed him at Madras, and very unlike he is, thank God, to Sir John Grogam, who lived in my house when he was a midshipman,—nay, whenever the service could permit, he resided with me; but, such is the general gratitude of mankind, when I asked him to take my son under his protection, for he is now high up in his profession, he sends me back one of those formal straight-forward letters which correspond to Shakspeare's description of life, being "full of sound and emptiness, meaning nothing."

"Oh gratitude!" said Banana, "I only knew one grateful person in my life, and he hung himself because he could not pay his

debts; so that he did the most ungrateful act in the world, for I lost both my money and my friend."

"I dare say," said Miss Ganjam, "that Robert, like all boys, was so taken with the novelty of his situation, that he forgot to follow Captain Ruffle's directions as to writing, and to-morrow or next day we shall get some account of our sailor."

"I am sure, my dear Jane," said her father, "I hope so; but I have had some awkward fears that all is not right; and yet Roberts declares he saw him actually in the coach, and that he recommended him to the care of an elderly lady: if the coach had been upset, our echoes of every noise, the newspapers, would have given us intelligence."

"Banana," said Mrs. Ganjam, "of course you intend to wait and dine with us."

'A broad hint to be off," replied the unfortunate man; "it 's evident you did not expect me to stay, by your having put the question in that manner. I never intrude my company, I assure you, Mrs. Ganjam."

"Why, Banana, you must be as mad as a dog in July," replied Ganjam; "you know very well that there is always a knife and fork at my table for you, until you accommodate yourself with an establishment."

"And not after it, of course," replied Banana, catching at the comma to cut in, "and therefore you have given me the hint. I shall take it, be assured; I shall not trouble you with my company much longer."

"My dear Benjamin," said Mrs. Ganjam, "why be so unkind as to imagine such an incivility, if it were nothing else?—why believe me capable of harbouring such a wish towards one I always loved?"

Banana's pride went down to zero: never was there a man of better heart, and never was there a man more touchy and more irritable.

"Well," said Ganjam, "my dear Banana, you may growl just as long as you feel inclined, and dine here or not, just as you please. I know you to be one of the most fanciful of human creatures, and therefore leave you entirely to your own disposition."

"Well," said Banana, "then I shall dine here, but it is quite impossible not to have understood the hint—that is all I mean to say."

The hour previous to dinner passed in the heavy manner such hours always pass, when one party are occupied by thoughts peculiar to themselves, and the other party are thinking on quite another subject. Whenever a pause ensued, the word Robert was always ready to escape from either lady; whilst Banana invariably, during every pause, muttered the word shampoo, and followed it up with "unfortunate man." At length dinner was announced, and in no very animated manner the four relations sat down to table. A silence very unusual ensued, for Banana had generally some unfortunate accident to recount, and when once he started on so prolific a subject, he contrived to occupy an hour or so in groaning over his miserable existence.

"We shall hear to-morrow," said Mrs. Ganjam; "I am quite sure Ruffle will write."

The butler started at the words.

"Are you sure," said the father, "that the Saturn is arrived?"

"The evening papers announce it," replied his daughter, "and therefore we may depend upon the news being correct."

"Why, it is hardly worth their while to publish such a trifle as that without some authority," replied Ganjam; but I should be sorry to pin my faith to the truth of any newspaper-report. Roberts," continued he, addressing the butler, "are you quite sure you placed Master Robert in the right coach?"

"Certainly, sir," said the butler with a smile, as much as to say, "just as if *I* could be mistaken."

"It certainly is very, *very* odd," said Mrs. Ganjam, that we have not heard one word of, or from him."

"Master Robert hurt his hand when the guard shut the coach-door, and perhaps that may be the reason why he has not written," replied the butler.

"Why, I never heard that before," hinted Ganjam.

During the whole of dinner, Banana never said one word but shampoo, and that in a very low tone. Once, when the servant asked him if he should fill his glass with Madeira, poor Banana very innocently answered, "shampoo."

A presentiment of some unpleasant news seemed to prevail during the whole time of dinner: on other occasions hilarity and jokes contributed to render the repast more agreeable, but now each member was silent as a monument. Whenever Mrs. Ganjam did endeavour to break the tiresome monotony of silence, it was an evident failure; it merely extracted a monosyllable in answer, and then followed a relapse. After the business of eating and drinking, by some termed the only comfort in life, was concluded, Mrs. Ganjam declared the drawing-room was so much warmer that she should make a hasty retreat. Jane willingly followed, thus leaving the two elderly gentlemen to make the best of their fears and forebodings.

"I cannot get over it," said Ganjam; "I have the most unaccountable heaviness of spirits

I ever remember to have experienced: I am certain some calamity is about to occur. We are told over and over again of men being forewarned of their death; and others, at an immense distance from where the murder has been committed, have seen their friends, thus sacrificed, stalking about, either like St. Denis without his head, or with throats dreadfully lacerated. The Irish have their banshee; and who has not heard the death-watch affirmed? Nay, the raven has croaked out the unwelcome intelligence, and nature has been convulsed when a king was murdered."

"I know," replied Banana, "that I was cruelly convulsed, when that old woman refused to shampoo me. I cannot make out how it is that all these unfortunate circumstances only occur to me. If I get into a house, some unforeseen occurrence drives me out of it; if I buy a horse, I am sure to be cheated; and if I ask a woman to shampoo me, I am sure to be insulted. I wish to Heaven I was back again in Java."

"And if," replied Ganjam, "a lawyer writes

to you, why you must pay for it. I told you I would be revenged for all your Job's comfortings, so read this; and when you have delivered your usual anathemas upon the whole tribe, perhaps you will deliver me the amount which I have discharged."

"Oh," said Banana, "I hate reading letters after dinner. I make it a rule never to bother myself either with bills or brokers after the Stock Exchange closes."

"But, my dear Banana, the contents of that letter will amuse you amazingly. It is in reference to a subject next to your heart, saving always the shampooing, which certainly appears to be the only present occupant in your mind."

"Oh, something amusing," grumbled Banana: "well, let us have a look at it, then; and forthwith he began in slow and solemn manner to unfold the letter. He started from the table, upsetting the wine, for which he instantly apologized, and lifting the letter close to the lamp which illumined the room, he hummed, hawed, and seemed suffering under the very

disagreeable sensation of choking. At last — for these were indications of rough temper, as cats-paws on the water are signs of squalls—he gave one deep audible whew ! and then out came his words as water bubbles from a bottle the moment the air is fairly established. It is a kind of trade-wind which continues in steady force as soon as it has assumed its sway. Ganjam kept his eye fixed upon his victim: the corners of his mouth betrayed the inward satisfaction he experienced from the angry feeling of Banana, who had all his life boasted of never having paid a lawyer's bill, and now found himself suddenly called upon to discharge his temper and the account.

" May I never breathe another moment—" began Banana, when he was stopped by Ganjam, who kept saying,

" Whatever you do, Banana, keep your temper. Now, don't let your feelings get the better of your reason; keep your temper, and read the account."

" May I never breathe another moment, I say—"

"Stop, stop," said Ganjam, with the most provoking coolness, "stop, stop, my brother. Do keep your temper, and reason like a man. Remember what Milton says:

> 'Many are the sayings of the wise
> In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
> Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
> And to the bearing well of all calamities.'"

"Curse Milton and his fortitude, and his patience, and all but his calamities!" thundered Banana, who had waited with suppressed impatience, in order to avail himself of the first stop Ganjam should make to take breath. "Curse him, I say; and may I never breathe another moment!—and this is the third time I have got as far as this, when interruption prevented my saying a word more,—May I never breathe another moment, if, after this, I ever read, or receive, or pay a lawyer's bill! For forty years I have never taken physic or draught, and now—"

"Now," interrupted Ganjam, "you will have to give one; that 's all the difference."

Here Banana held the letter about a yard from the tip of his nose, he being rather short-

sighted, and holding it at arm's-length, read as follows:

'Benjamin Banana, Esq.

To James Noakes.'

"What do I owe James Noakes? I should like to know. Why, I never saw the rascal in all my life. What am I to pay him for?"

Here he read again.

'As to the business of Mrs. Wrathful.'

"What! pay for Mrs. Wrathful's business!"

	s.	d.
'To attending you as to the business of serving a legal notice upon Mr. Benjamin Banana to quit your premises	0	6 8
'Long conference with yourself on the subject abovementioned . .	0	6 8
'Writing to Mr. Banana on the subject	0	5 0
'Attendance upon Mr. Banana with letter	0	3 0
'Long attendance with Mr. Ganjam and Mr. Banana's solicitor .	0	13 4

"Who's my solicitor? I should like to know," vociferated Banana; "who is he? the devil or one of his imps? Who does he call himself? What is the rascal's name? Mr. What—Mr. Sneakam? This is infamous! This is most unchristian conduct, I do aver!"

'With you again on the subject of the above conference . .	0	6	8
'Calling at your house, and finding you not at home' . . .	0	6	8

"That," said Banana, with a malignant grin, his hand shaking like a magnetic needle, "is the only charge I would willingly pay. I certainly would pay 6*s.* 8*d.* not to be at home whenever they called."

'For writing to Mrs. Wrathful, explaining the business . .	0	6	8
	£2	14	8

"Two pounds fourteen and eight-pence, because that old devil attempted to cheat me! Is this the boasted justice of England? Is it for this we hear of the purity of her laws?

Is this law?—As sure as my name is Banana, the instant we ever have a peace, which certainly looks pretty distant, that moment I go abroad;—this is most scandalous!"

"Why, Banana," said Ganjam, "I should not wonder if you had an action entered against you for defamation of character, about that shampooing job to-day; that woman may force you to take her lodgings: you are quite at her mercy; you cannot be off because she refuses to shampoo you."

"Now, Ganjam, listen to me for a moment. It is said, or was said, or will be said, that the law, which was a dead letter, is now an open book. We are told, that in no country under the sun are the poor so well protected as in this country. Now, will you tell me how a poor person is ever to obtain justice, when the defence of an action would be his ruin if he lost his cause? Why, at this rate, allowing the action to be to recover the sum of forty pounds, the charges might actually amount to three hundred! How can a man

of limited means run the risk of defending a cause, when such ruin might follow?"

"Oh!" said Ganjam, "now you speak like a reasonable man. There is no one subject so much talked of, and so grossly neglected, as our law and the means of obtaining justice. It is perfectly impossible for a poor man to have recourse to it; the very fees of court and counsel would eat up his whole annual earnings; and mayhap the man is not of a litigious temper, but is forced to defend the action, to save his family from certain ruin. It is, then, a choice of evils—but the choice is desperation. If a man does not plead 'in forma pauperis'—and no one who has twenty pounds would like that, for it is an old and a true saying, that the man who pleads his own cause has a goose for a client, which goose is sure to be plucked of his last feather—why, he must pay counsel's fees; he must employ more than one counsel, for the junior, as they term it, watches the case. To plead his own cause is to place ignorance to combat know-

ledge. So many are the niceties of the law, so many are the ways of evading justice, that flaws in the indictment, — the calling a man, although the man is identified, by a wrong Christian name — the mistaking the boundary of a parish — with fifty thousand other little quibbles, may lose the action. I remember once being in court when the counsel for the defendant had a letter which was in direct contradiction to the testimony given by the witness; the letter was written by the witness; the counsel turned it down in such a manner as only to show the signature, and he asked the witness, 'Is this letter in your handwriting?' — 'It is,' said the witness. — 'That is enough,' said the counsel, handing the letter to the clerk of the court, 'I shall make use of that by and by.' When it came to the defence, the counsel proposed to read the letter; upon which, up jumped the plaintiff's counsel, and objected to its production, 'Because,' said he, 'my learned friend ought to have questioned the witness as to the letter; but he cannot read that letter unless the witness

is in the box.' The judge held to that opinion —the cause was lost—the defendant had to pay £400—And why?—merely because a *form of law* prevented justice! I tell you, Banana—"

"Holloa!" said Banana, starting from the comfortable snooze in which he was indulging, with his back to Ganjam, and his feet nearly inside the grate, and who merely caught the words, law, justice, and his own name; "What! more attorneys? more law? No no; I have heard quite enough of that," and, jumping up, he darted out of the room, and ran up-stairs.

CHAPTER VI.

How oft a day which fair and mild appears,
Grows dark with fate, and mars the toil of years.
SIR WM. JONES.

BANANA'S sudden entrance and the explanation for a moment seemed to brighten the countenances of the ladies; but the momentary smile soon gave way to the unusual sombre humour which seemed to hang like a pall over the family. The tea followed at the usual hour; but both the harp and piano missed the touches which made them worthy of being heard; and the voice, which evening after evening had warbled its sweetness to their melody, was for the present lost as to recreation and amusement.

"If I were to begin life again," said Banana, "I would be a sailor. Of all professions, that of sailors is the best. All their worldly cares are in a small space: they need have no thought as to their food or their occupations; both are provided for by the king or the captain; and certain it is that, after we have accustomed ourselves to our own society, we are not fond of the world or its fashions."

"Why, my dear uncle," replied Miss Jane, "I never heard you before so disposed to philosophize. Surely a sailor's life is a life of continual hardships and privation. They are separated from their friends; they are torn from their relations; their paths are trackless; and if in the many changes and chances of this mortal life they escape unhurt, it is almost a bar to those honours for which they toil and fight, and labour and watch, during the best part of their days. It is a life constantly exposed to the world's basest ingratitude, and where the deserving and the assiduous are overtopped by the idle and the worthless, provided the former are poor and the latter rich."

"Very few rich men," said Ganjam, "are such fools as to join the navy; for, where a man can command, he is never very ready to be a slave. But the naval service of this country has both its advantages and its discomforts. I do not know if the remark is true that the greatest dunce in the family is sent to sea; but this I know, that boys of high mettle and daring spirit are always the youths who try that life of hardships. But if success follows the step, then no life is more pleasant, for they are kings—absolute monarchs; and true is the remark of a great philosopher, that the object of all men is to command."

Poor Mrs. Ganjam, who sat in a large arm-chair near the fire, and who was busily employed in the innocent recreation of knitting, gave a deep sigh, as her husband finished the preceding sentence.

"Ah!" said she, "Robert was just the boy you have described. Rash, spirited, thoughtless; but he was generous and kind. I sadly fear his will be a life of misfortune and vexation; but if he returns with the virtues of the

sailor, I can easily rub off the roughness of the diamond, and make him a polished jewel."

"Why," asked Miss Jane, "are sailors generally so liberal?" she being willing to turn to the favourable view, in order to dispel the grief which a tear or two had shown on the face of her mother.

"It is," said Banana, "because they are free from the world and the cursed shackles which fashion imposes. Here all is deceit; not a person approaches but is actuated by selfish motives; the very root of true friendship is dead, and, consequently, no one is willing to rush forward to assist the man who is known to be as hollow and as cold as a well. With sailors this is not the case; they form one of a small community, where the slightest breach of faith is recognized by the whole body, and where dishonesty cannot be skreened: hence, a mutual confidence is engendered, and he who acts liberally to his friend in distress knows that he may expect the same return."

"I think, brother Banana, that your argument goes to this: that self, in both sailor and

soldier, seaman or landsman, is the ruling influence; that, even in the greatest act of liberality, the maxim of 'who gives to worth receives a benefit,' is never forgotten; and that, therefore, while the right hand of friendship and assistance is offered, the left hand calculates the return with interest."

"The return, on shore," said Banana, chuckling at the conceit, "is of a very left-hand nature indeed, and is very often left in the lurch altogether; but circumstances have come under my notice, in which such uncommon generosity has been displayed, that I am afraid to mention them, lest my veracity should be impugned. The hollow friendship of the world would scarcely credit what it would be almost ashamed to see held up as a kind of reprimand to its more fashionable habits."

"Well, thank God," said Ganjam, "I have lived long enough in this world to find out that true friendship may exist, although I readily admit it is very rarely found. But, brother Banana, methinks you should tell your tale of wonder and generosity, in order that we may

benefit by the rough example, and prove by our praise that we are not blind to the good motives of others, or backward in rendering to honest liberality the applause it merits."

"Oh, my dear brother, do tell us some of these generous traits," said Mrs. Ganjam; "it will reconcile me in a certain degree to my son's profession when I find that it is not all heartless ingratitude; and, as Jane seems but little disposed to run over the notes of either the piano or her voice, it will while away time, which for once seems to hang heavy, and give my heart a little ease before the hour of retirement arrives."

"It is a long and somewhat painful anecdote: it occurred on board the ship which conveyed me to India; and, as both the actors are dead, I will endeavour to make the evening less heavy than my previous conversation has rendered it. But, as sailors say, I hate twisting long yarns, so do not be astonished if I break off in the middle; and if you fall asleep as I did over Ganjam's digest of the laws after dinner, I assure you I shall not be offended, but

rather rejoice to find you in that state which will give a temporary relief from the unusual heaviness, I suppose, occasioned by my society."

"But, Banana," said Ganjam, screwing himself into an easy position, "mind this, I object to any digression whatever, for if you get into a tiffoon or on an elephant's back, then away you go from the subject, and it will be midnight before we come to the middle part of the story."

"Agreed! agreed!" replied Banana; "stop me if I do, for I hate anything of the kind: and, moreover, never until now did I hear myself accused of any such thing; for if a man intends to tell a story, I think the best thing he can do is to get through it as rapidly as possible.—It was in the Straits of Malacca that the first unfortunate occurrence took place, for, from the time we left the Thames, until we arrived thus far on our voyage, we had been very lucky in our winds. As is customary on board Indiamen outward-bound, when we came into the warm latitudes, we enticed the young ladies who were bound to the market either in Cal-

cutta or Madras, to dance during the evenings; we had sufficient music on board, and I assure you we passed our time pleasantly enough—as far as pleasure can exist in a ship, which keeps rolling about like a swing at a fair. We dined always about three o'clock, and the captain, who was about fifty years of age, always provided amply for his passengers. I remember his cook made macaroni particularly well."

Here a deep sigh came from the direction of Ganjam, who cast his eyes round towards his brother in the most pitiable manner, as much as to say, "What sin have I committed that I am doomed to bear this infliction?" Banana stopped short, and looked round; Ganjam had his finger in the usual position, his mouth moving about like a babe's at dinner, his eyes fixed upon Banana, but with a countenance so melancholy and so resigned that Mrs. and Miss Ganjam burst into a fit of laughter.

"This is too bad," said Banana, "I really am the most unfortunate man in the whole world; if ever I intend, or endeavour, to tell a

plain matter-of-fact occurrence, I am interrupted by the sighs and groans of Ganjam, who sits jammed up in his chair like an automaton chess-player, and invariably makes it a rule to interrupt me by some indescribable noise or another. Here Banana was brought to a full stop in consequence of a loud rap at the street-door, and, whilst the wondering people guessed who the intruder could be, the servant ushered in Lieutenant Mizen.

The gallant officer, who would as soon have walked up to a cannon's mouth as he would have eaten his breakfast, if duty called and honour prompted, seemed suddenly overcome in his resolutions, and advanced in the timid manner people always do, who, not having been much accustomed to female society, unexpectedly find themselves in it. Ganjam had left his automaton position, and Banana, who was the very acme of politeness, had begun to bob his head like the figure of a Mandarin in a tea-shop. The man-of-war was flat aback, as the sailors say, and before he could brace round, Ganjam had saved him half his

preface, by begging to know to what circumstance he was indebted for having procured him the honour of this visit. Banana advanced a chair near the table, and Jane looked into the tea-pot, and gave evident symptoms of weakening the beverage.

"I believe," said Mr. Mizen, faltering a little as he broke ground, "that I have the honour of addressing Mr. Ganjam?"

"I am Mr. Ganjam," said the proper gentleman, advancing a little; "may I beg of you to be seated?" at the same time pointing to a chair.

Mizen made an advance, and then began to stammer out some words of acknowledgment, which kept hanging to his lips like icicles to a Russian's mustaches; at last, after backing and filling for a minute, the young lieutenant came to an anchor exactly in front of Jane's eyes: a kind of battery he was by no means prepared to face, the guns of which were very frequently directed towards him, and would have done more damage to the young lieutenant's heart, or, at least, made it palpitate

quicker, than any eighteen-pounder, however well loaded and directed. Mrs. Ganjam, whose excessive fastidiousness of manners prevented her from asking the question she would have done, suggested some of that Chinese beverage, which had had time enough to become as bitter as aloes.

As the conversation had come to a full stop, and the Lieutenant kept fumbling in his coat pocket, it occurred to Banana, who always viewed mankind in the most suspicious light, that the intruder was one of those gentlemen who pay visits in order to extract money from the pockets of the quiet inhabitants, either by words or weapons. He therefore ran his eyes over the dress of Mizen, and, from his splashed pantaloons and dirty boots, jumped at once to the conclusion that the Lieutenant was no better than he should be; Banana made the most intelligible signals, for, by snapping his fingers, he indicated the probable result of the Lieutenant's search. And then, by way of defence, he began to poke the fire—a

liberty he hated any man to take in his own house, and which he very cautiously avoided in another's. He left the poker in the fire, and, standing with his back (an indelicacy he would have avoided under any other circumstances) towards his red-hot friend, looked on in no easy mind. "I think," said he to Ganjam, giving a very suspicious look at Mizen, "we want some more coals—shall I ring the bell?" and then, moving behind the Lieutenant, he signalized his apprehensions.

"Poh! poh!" said Ganjam, coolly, "the room's as hot as an oven. I presume, Mr. Mizen, that you belong to the Saturn, and are just arrived in London?"

"Exactly so," replied the Lieutenant; "and I am endeavouring to find a letter, which Captain Ruffle desired me to deliver, and likewise to explain how I can be serviceable to your son."

"Oh then, all is right," ejaculated Mrs. Ganjam; "I hope, Mr. Mizen, my son will be pleased with the service he has chosen."

"It is rather a hard life at first," replied Mizen, "but a youngster soon grows accustomed to it; and I have no doubt your son will do as well as the rest of us: indeed, Captain Ruffle has spoken of him as a youngster of spirit and resolution, and these never fail to like the profession, and generally become ornaments of it."

"Jane's eyes lighted up with expressive gratitude for Mizen's echo, as she imagined it, of Ruffle's opinion; all began to wear the countenance of satisfaction; and Ganjam, who held Ruffle's letter in his hand, and who never betrayed the smallest anxiety in the world, quietly placed it on the table, and continued the conversation.

"Keeping watch," said Ganjam, "during such cold foggy weather as this is, cannot be very agreeable or pleasant, I should imagine?"

"Why, sir," replied Mizen, "we do not think it so great a hardship as other people who are unaccustomed to it may imagine. We are broken in to it by degrees; for when youngsters first come in the navy, the officer

of the watch generally sends him to bed before half the time is expired: but," continued Mizen, whose shyness had gradually given way as he found himself more and more at home, " when we first enter the service, we consider it an honour to be placed in a watch."

" But," said Jane, who viewed the Lieutenant's face as an index to a kind and feeling heart, " a boy of Robert's youth and inexperience is sure to find consideration; for it is justly said, that nothing is more gratifying to a sailor than to protect the weak and shelter the distressed."

Mizen bowed respectfully, and seemed to reflect back a slight tinge of crimson, which rushed over Jane's face and then again left it to its usual colour. " We never require more than a youngster can do; occasionally he gets a wet jacket, and every now and then his fingers are rather redder than a sheet of paper. But," continued Mizen, " I regret that I must be under the necessity of taking my leave suddenly, for Captain Ruffle has desired me

to call on Tower Hill, and see if any more seamen are pressed for the Saturn."

"I hope, Mr. Mizen, you will do me the favour to breakfast here to-morrow, at half-past nine," said Ganjam; "for I wish much to speak to you concerning my son, and perhaps then your time will be more at your disposal."

"I shall be most happy," said the Lieutenant; "and if I can contribute to the comfort of your son, I shall find an additional pleasure in so doing." Saying which, and bowing to Mrs. and Miss Ganjam, the hand of Mr. Ganjam was shaken, the bell rung, the door shut, and the family were left to themselves.

"You see," said Ganjam, "how people worry themselves in this world about nothing. Robert has forgotten his duty, and that is by no means uncommon, and you have unnecessarily shed tears for an imaginary evil."

"Oh, Ganjam," replied his wife, "I am sure I could shed more tears of happiness now than ever imaginary grief called from my eyes. I could have asked thousands of questions concerning Robert, and yet my heart misgave me,

and I faltered in the intention. I dreaded to hear some slight insinuation, made doubly great from the mysterious look, the cautious expressions, or the evasive answer. Surely, none can feel those painful sensations but a parent?"

"That is a very fine speech indeed," said Banana, "and if I had ventured upon such a sea of troubles, Ganjam would have given another deep sigh. But let us hear Ruffle's account of the boy, I expect to see him return as tractable as a mill-horse, although he went from home a very untamed colt."

Ganjam, who took every thing coolly, took his time to inspect the seal, and made some comments upon the armorial bearings of the Ruffles, whilst the ladies kept insinuating that it was nearly eleven o'clock, and that the discussion on heraldry might be kept for another occasion. At last, after various delays, the seal was broken, and Ganjam read as follows:

"H. M. S. Saturn, Plymouth.

"DEAR GANJAM.

"Your son will make perhaps a very good sailor, but he will be a very indifferent traveller

if he parts company with his portmanteau. He has occasioned me a world of uneasiness, as I have, ever since we sailed, been very anxious as to his safety. I thought I told you, that midshipmen were not allowed chests the size of those used by your honourable masters in Leadenhall-street to import their tea. I shall have it broken up, and make him get another. I have no time to write any particular details; but Mizen, my junior lieutenant, will call on you, and give you any information you may require. He may be of use in taking charge of your son, for he is a steady fellow, and very kind and obliging. I have only made one capture, a small privateer, and have experienced more bad weather than I remember for many years.

"My best compliments to Mrs. Ganjam. You may tell her that I will take every care of her young hopeful, and I dare say I shall be able to make something of him after a cruise or two, at this season of the year.

"Yours, very truly,

"THOMAS RUFFLE."

"Well," said Banana, "I think that a very unsatisfactory letter indeed, and if my agent were to write to me in that manner, I should be very much inclined to appoint another. It is like a broker who says the stocks have fallen but never gives the last quotation."

"I do not like the part which relates to Ruffle's uneasiness on Robert's account; and I more than fear he has not conducted himself with propriety," said Ganjam.

"Boys will be boys," remarked Jane; "and Nelson himself said that lads of spirit made always the best officers. Besides, Captain Ruffle seems to think he will do very well after a cruise or two. Dear little fellow! how I should like to see him in his uniform coat and sword."

"Oh! if you once get upon dress, you will gratify Ganjam amazingly. You will get plenty of sighs and groans from him; but it is time for me to retire, so good night. I shall come to-morrow morning to hear Mr. Mizen's account of young Scapegrace." So saying, Banana bowed himself out of the room.

"Don't practise the fiddle, Banana," said

Ganjam, " and remember not to ask any of the female servants to shampoo you. Good night."

The party separated, and the curtains of repose were drawn over the bed of sleep. The morrow soon came, for those who slumber well are sad reckoners as to time, and the waste of half-life vanishes truly like a dream. Mizen, like all good officers, was punctual as to time. No one circumstance tends more to forward the views of a public man in life than punctuality. That man does more in one day from a system, than the frivolous and careless, as to minutes, get through in a year. Ganjam was ready to receive his visitor ; and Banana, who always walked into the room with his watch in his hand in order to certify unto others his regard of himself, at half-past nine exactly made a distant and reserved bow to the young lieutenant. The conversation, which, like all English conversations, is generally begun by the weather, was interrupted by the entrance of Jane, who apologized for her negligence in being one minute behind her time.

"Yes," said Banana, "I for one receive your apology, and beg to express my thanks to Mr. Mizen, for, had he not been here, we might have waited half-an hour."

Jane blushed. The remark brought the blood to her face in a moment, and placed her in that most awkward of all situations, namely, having to lie against a recorded truth. However, women are seldom quite off their guard, and Jane admitted the truth of the remark, but hinted her anxiety concerning her brother as the reason.

"Well shuffled out of," said Banana, and, turning to Mizen, he began the conversation. "I suppose, like all sailors, you like your profession?"

"You guess rightly, sir," replied Mizen. "Sailors are more attached to the service of their choice than any other men, and the reason is, the constant variety it affords. Can any one imagine a life more horribly monotonous than that of a regiment stationed in a country-town?"

"Why, that is bad enough," said Ganjam;

"but what do you think of a line-of-battle ship kept under the admiral's lee, to tack and wear at stated hours—to stand off-and-on-shore —to see the same headland—to be exposed night and day—to have no variation but that of the weather and the compass, and to be regularly informed of the captures made by other ships whilst the fleet are employed in blockading the enemy, who very wisely, and for fear of having to change their harbour or their house, remain quietly at anchor, or only come out to exercise when their foes are sufficiently distant to enable them so to do with a certainty of a return to port."

"Good morning, Mr. Mizen," said Mrs. Ganjam, as she entered the room, at which moment her husband applied his hand to the bell-rope.

Roberts soon after entered with a hissing urn, and in due time the party were seated.

"I hope you found," said Miss Ganjam, "a sufficient supply of men for your ship last night."

"Indeed we have been fortunate, I find,"

replied Mizen, "and so unfortunate, I may say," glancing a slight fire of the eyes in the direction of the daughter, "for now I shall be obliged to return to the Saturn almost immediately."

"And when do you expect to sail again?" continued Jane.

"When the refit of the ship is completed, I imagine we shall start upon another cruise. We do not eat the bread of idleness, I assure you; and we earn, and earn hardly, our scanty pay."

"Scanty enough," replied Banana. "There is hardly a clerk in a banking-house, who dangles his feet from a high stool, that does not receive more for doing less; besides which his nights are his own, and he sleeps in comfort."

"That is true," said Mizen; "but we have always the hope of reward, and we have likewise ambition to spur us on. A man who rises by his own merit in our service, must always have a glorious retrospect in old age."

"And plenty of rheumatism for a reward," said Banana.

At this moment Roberts entered with a letter, which was given to Ganjam.

"Thank God!" said Banana, "that's not to me. I cannot find out what people can have to say to each other, that they keep scribbling and scribbling day after day."

"Is it from Robert?" said Mrs. Ganjam.

"No, my dear," replied her husband; "this is from Dorchester."

"How very remiss of him not to write!" said Jane. "He must have known how anxious we should all be to hear how he passed his time, and how he liked his change of life."

"I suppose," said Mizen, "the young gentleman is in the country amusing himself."

"I am sure I hope so," replied his mother; "but I thought such recreations were not allowed. When a boy once enters your service, I thought it difficult to obtain leave of absence for any time."

"Yes," replied Mizen, "Captain Ruffle is not very fond of granting any recreation; but

your son has been beforehand with him there and taken French leave."

At this moment, when the dreadful calamity was about to be announced from the question which must have followed, Banana, in one of his nervous moments, in preparing to place an egg in the egg-cup, convulsively and unintentionally closed his hand. The shell broke, and the soft boiled food dripped through his fingers on the tablecloth.

"Oh, good Heaven!" he cried, "what have I done? I declare I only took the egg up in this manner," said he, taking up another, "and it broke in my hand. I really am very sorry, Mrs. Ganjam. Good God! and such an exhibition too! I will ring the bell. This is very unlucky, very unfortunate indeed."

Banana's nervous exhibition excited no little merriment. He continued with unceasing rapidity to apologize for his misfortune, for he never would allow it to be carelessness, and kept up such a running fire of words, that nothing short of exhaustion brought his tirade to a comma. At last, for there must be an end

even to excuses, his tongue stopped, and left a vacancy for any other remark. This was eagerly seized by Mrs. Ganjam, who asked Mr. Mizen what he meant by taking French leave.

This was easily explained, but not to the satisfaction of the ladies. They were very apprehensive that Robert had been guilty of some breach of discipline, and would have commented seriously on his want of prudence, had not the lieutenant begun to address Mr. Ganjam.

"I believe, sir, I mentioned to you, that, owing to the number of men we have been fortunate enough to crimp, my stay in town must be very short."

Ganjam nodded assent.

"Captain Ruffle," he continued, "is very anxious to get to sea; every exertion is used to refit the ship, and I fear, from the conversation which has passed, that we shall sail without your son; for if, as Miss Ganjam informs me, he is in the country amusing himself, I fear he will not be able to join us in time, more

especially as I know Captain Ruffle intends to sail the instant I return."

"This will be very unfortunate," replied Mr. Ganjam; "but, as Captain Ruffle has given leave of absence, I conclude he has likewise given him instructions when to join."

"Indeed," replied Mizen, "I thought Captain Ruffle desired him to join immediately; for the principal object of my visit was, in compliance with the Captain's request, to volunteer my services in taking charge of him; and I really do not see how I can remain in town one hour later than to-morrow morning."

"I am sure," said Mrs. Ganjam, "we shall be very grateful for any kindness you may bestow upon my son. I hope he will behave himself in such a manner as to secure your friendship and support."

"Madam," said Mizen, "I pledge myself to do all that I can do for him. If, therefore, you can send to him to come to town directly, I will take his place in the coach for to-morrow, and will call here at an early hour to accompany him."

"Send for him!" said Banana. "Why, where the devil is he, Mr. Mizen? Is he not on board the Saturn, or is he cruising about the country?"

"Really," replied the lieutenant, somewhat surprised at the hasty question, "really, Mr. Banana, I am quite ignorant of his situation; but this I know, that Captain Ruffle has had some trouble to keep him on the ship's books; and if he does not join before the next muster, he must be erased from the list. For this reason I was particularly anxious to see him safe on board."

"How very unfortunate!" replied Mrs. Ganjam. "What can be done?"

"Why, madam," said the lieutenant, "if your son is in the country, so far distant as not to be in town by to-morrow, you had better write to his friends with whom he is staying, to send him across the country immediately; but if he is within hail of London, you had better despatch some one to bring him to town to-night, and, as I said before, I will take charge of him."

"Mr. Mizen," said Mr. Ganjam, in a slow measured tone, "will you answer me one or two questions? for here is some mystery I should like to have explained."

"Most certainly," replied the young lieutenant.

"Pray, sir," said Ganjam, "when did you leave the Saturn?"

"The day before yesterday," was the reply.

"Was my son then on board the ship, or was he on shore on leave from Captain Ruffle?"

"Gad!" grumbled Banana, "just like an attorney—questions and answers."

"He was not on board the Saturn," answered Mizen, "but was on shore, as you say, on leave from Captain Ruffle."

"Then he left the Saturn previously to your coming to town?"

"Left the Saturn!" replied Mizen, with a smile; "why he never joined that I heard of; we have got his chest, but for the owner—"

"Good heavens!" interrupted Mrs. Ganjam, "what do I hear?"

"Stop, stop, my dear," said her husband. "Mr. Mizen, answer me this question :—

"Was my son on board the Saturn during the last cruise ?"

"Most certainly not," replied the lieutenant ; "we sailed quite suddenly, and Captain Ruffle said he had not time to join."

"Well, so I expected," said Ganjam ; "but since you anchored this time, has he not been on board ?"

"Most certainly not, sir," was the answer. "When we anchored, a man from the coach-office brought his chest on board ; but, in answer to the Captain's questions relative to your son, declared that he had not come down with his chest. This satisfied Ruffle that your son was detained by you in London, and I assure you we have never seen or heard of him."

"Oh, my son, my son !" cried Mrs. Ganjam, "my own, my dearest son ! Where is he ? what can have become of him ? what shall we do to recover him ?" And here all the feelings of the mother broke through the restraints of society.

She sobbed bitterly, and, before any further questions could be asked, it was requisite to remove her to another room. She had become dreadfully hysterical, and Jane's feelings were only suppressed for the moment by the dread of some serious illness happening to her parent. Banana paced the room like a panther in a cage, taking short turns, and looking at the herald of the ill news as if he could have devoured him. Mizen rose quickly from the table, and was so bewildered at the scene and the mystery he had unravelled, that he stood stock still, with his eyes fixed upon the retreating figures of the females; whilst Ganjam, who alone retained his coolness, rang the bell, and stood with his arms folded, quietly awaiting the servant. Roberts very shortly entered; but in a confusion of face and cowardly tremble of his white lips that betrayed his guilt and the knowledge of its discovery. He advanced towards the table as if to remove the urn, but Ganjam interrupted the intention. "Roberts," said Ganjam, in a very impressive manner, "you said that you saw Master Ro-

bert *in* the coach: now, on your oath, is that true?"

Roberts faltered, but admitted that he left the coach-office before the departure of the vehicle.

"Then," resumed Ganjam, "the story of the lady under whose charge you placed him, the sick infant, the back to the horses, and the change of places, is all false?"

Roberts looked like a convicted liar as he was, and hung down his guilty head.

"And the finger which was hurt by the sudden closing of the door," continued Ganjam, "all false too; not one word of truth from beginning to end; not a syllable of truth even to found expectation upon. Out of my sight, you dishonest, false, faithless servant, and let me never fix my eyes on that face again, for the remembrance of the liar is now so strong, that memory will never erase it. Henceforth when I see a man of your height, with a broad, unmeaning face, eyes far apart, with thick lips, and a crying, cringing countenance, then shall I know him to be a man unworthy of credit,

and as great a scoundrel as the vicinity of Pall-Mall could produce."

"You infernal vagabond," said Banana, whose turns in the room became shorter and shorter, "the law shall never protect you or any such liar;" and so saying, he assisted the butler out of the room by a propelling motion of the foot, applied to the western settlements of the lying varlet. Away went the servant at an accelerated pace, mumbling something about assault and lawyer, which only increased Banana's rage, and his disposition to have all the satisfaction in his power for his money.

In the mean time, Mizen, who was a good-hearted, gallant fellow, entered into the feelings of the family: he volunteered to rummage London for the youngster; to send an express to Ruffle: he proposed about forty different schemes, all of which were useless, excepting the one of making every inquiry at the coach-office. Mrs. Ganjam was soon seriously indisposed: Jane waited upon her with the attendance of affection and duty. Banana ordered a hackney-coach—a vehicle he abhorred

as much as a hearse, and, dead or alive, he never sighed to be placed in either one or the other.

The parting of Mizen was merely the hasty retreat of a bad actor: he bowed, hesitated, assured; in short, like the outline of a dinner oration, "he should have great pleasure in being in any degree serviceable, and the instant his efforts were crowned with success, that instant he should be proud to present himself to the family."

But who can paint the sufferings of a mother when her child is lost? the hope of recovery rests upon the uncertainty of existence. Who can picture the thrilling feeling of anxiety which every noise is liable to create? or who can imagine the momentary pleasure when hope is nearly realized, and before the cup of expectation is dashed from the lip of affection? This fatal day left a blot upon the heart: the family, once so cheerful, fell into despondency; and days which passed slowly and sadly, were succeeded by years of affliction and sorrow.

CHAPTER VII.

——" But, if there is an hereafter,
And that there is, Nature uninfluenced
And suffer'd to speak out tells every man,
Then must it be an awful thing to die !"

The Grave.

Two days had elapsed, and no stranger was visible. Captain Smith resolved to return to the nearest port on the coast of Africa, in order to take in a fresh supply of water; for, in the eagerness to lighten the Rapid in order to effect her escape, they had started so much that it was deemed unsafe to continue the voyage to the West Indies. As usual with unfortunate men, every thing appeared to set directly against us; the wind, which, like fortune, is generally variable, seemed at present, like adversity, always to set with a strong tide against its victims, until, to aggravate the misfortune, it died into a calm. The reduction of

the allowance of water was one of our many miseries, so little known to the affluent, who loll on the silken couches of luxury, and who feel the want of pleasure as a real misfortune. Oh, none can tell but those who have experienced it, the dreadful annoyance of a mouth eternally parched with heat, the constant want of a fluid little relished when easily procured, the pangs, the fevered excitement of thirst! The portion hoarded with care, was served out with niggard precaution; the calm waters reflected the heat of the tropical sun, and a haze arising from the excessive heat, seemed to spread itself over the ocean! Day after day we watched with anxious look the occasional cat's-paw of wind which ruffled the water at different distances, and hailed them as the forerunner of the breeze which was to bear us to our port, and restore us to our comforts; the clouds, which sometimes rose from the horizon, were watched with rapture, and as often as they dissipated into nothingness, even the stoutest heart seemed to feel the disappointment, and the merriest to sink into despair.

The slaves were the first to feel the sad effects of the reduction of allowance; some sickened immediately, and wasted gradually away. The heat of the hold was oppressive beyond imagination, and the nauseous effluvia arising from such a congregated mass of negroes, by no means tended to render the ship more agreeable. It was unsafe to allow them the trifling recreation of liberty; they were suffering from want of water, and the half-madness it occasioned, made it doubly necessary to keep them in the securest confinement. The spirit of insubordination soon manifested itself amongst the ship's company, and nothing but the determined conduct of Captain Smith and his bloodhound, the mate, could have controlled the half-mutinous crew.

It was on the third day after the calm had established itself, and the idle sail had hung without motion from the yard, when the long expected calamity in the shape of death, first occurred. A young negro who, when shipped, had been suffering from the wounds occasioned by the rust of the shackle, and who was of a

violent and uncontrollable disposition, had hastened the end of his miserable existence by his fretful temper and excited manner. I shall never forget my first feeling when the poor emaciated slave was brought on deck in order to try the effect of what little air the heavens allowed us. He was then nearly totally exhausted, and even the unmerciful and tyrannous conduct of the mate, in order to excite the poor sufferer to some exertion in his own behalf, perfectly failed; he was stretched upon the deck under the awning, his eyes already fixed, but with a beam of joy lighting up his sickened countenance which riveted me to the fatal scene. Oh! that smile which grew over his face as the poor wretch felt the application of a wet sponge upon his lips — the heaven of his expectation! the eye for a moment blazed with life, and even this poor, miserable, degraded victim appeared to cling to existence, as if Hope had pictured some futurity of greater comfort beyond his present sufferings. He lingered on, apparently without any particular pain, until the hoarse gurgling of his

breath, as it rattled in his throat, announced as near at hand his delivery from the thraldom of this world's tyrants.

The crew had assembled abaft the mainmast, and in silence watched the termination of their victim's life. The features were gradually sharpening, and even the nose, which death could scarcely alter in a negro, assumed a different shape; the bright black of the complexion gave way to a dark sodden blue, whilst the lips were livid, and the eyes sickening into inanimation. At last they fixed, and fixed their glassy balls upon the captain's face; the expression of exertion died into a calm and tranquil repose, and without a convulsive start, as if the body were struck by death, the slave was freed from his master, and his life of misery was terminated.

There seemed an awful feeling of respect for the dead. Captain Smith's eyes were riveted on the negro's; he remained for some moments more like a statue than a man, when suddenly some tears broke through their barriers, and he turned away his head, and walked aft. The

mate had no feeling even when the negro lived, and his hatred for the race was manifested directly the poor wretch was dead. "Here," said he, addressing the crew, "take hold of this black beast and bundle him overboard; we shall have enough to do with these stinking devils yet before we get safe back again."

I shrank away from this inhuman villain and was sneaking towards the cabin, when he called me by name, and desired me in his usual coarse manner to "handle a leg, and learn to be serviceable to my friends." I could not escape, for the captain's son, who was smiling at my fear, freshened my way, as he called it, towards the corpse. Until this moment I was unacquainted with death; it was the first dead man I had ever seen, and I shrank from the negro with an unutterable horror. In vain I cried to be excused; this only made the desire of tyranny the stronger. Young Smith took me by the arm, and, leading me towards the corpse, threw me over the body. I fell nearly as dead as the negro, and shuddered into a perfect deprivation of strength; the very

touch of the corpse had nearly deprived me of reason, and at that moment I could have kissed the hand which would have in reality finished my existence.

"Halloo!" said the mate, "here's a pretty fuss about a live gentleman and a dead nigger! we must make the youngster better acquainted with his companions. Why, what the devil is he afraid of? does he think the black will eat him? Here, Jones," said he, addressing one of the sailors, "hand me a rope-yarn or two whilst I lash them together until he endeavours to bury the negro."

This warning roused me from my situation; I resolved to exert all my power in preference to being lashed to the dead body, and therefore taking the hand of the enfranchised slave, I vainly endeavoured to move the body in the direction indicated.

"It's like an ant at a black-beetle," said young Smith; "we must lend him a hand:" and without the slightest expression of fear he seized the other hand, the mate and Jones taking each a leg, and in this manner we drag-

ged the negro to the starboard-gangway: here we rested him.

I thought that some prayer for the dead was about to be offered up, for the crew had assembled by the mainmast and on the booms, and those who wore their hats, unconsciously uncovered their heads.

"Come, bear a hand," said the captain, "and bury the poor fellow."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the mate; "come, you Ganjam, lend a hand at the launch, and get accustomed to cutting away the dog-shores."

Again I applied my little power,—less perhaps from the unwillingness of the act, and the fear occasioned by touching a dead man: we edged his head over the side, when the mate lifting the legs up, overtoppled the balance, and calling out 'launch oh!' propelled the body over the gangway; the corpse, touching against the side, fell with a dismal splash into the sea, and the waters rolled over the dead.

No kind expression followed the act. No 'God bless him!' fell from the lips of the bystanders. No 'Amen!' awfully closed the

scene. The circles of the water had lost themselves in the greatness of the ocean, and no ruffle remained to indicate the last reposing spot of the negro; but all was calm and hushed around: no welcome breeze blew to move us from the spot, and the ship with her taunt mast and shining sides, might by fancy be created into the monument of the dead. Well I remember lingering over the gangway and believing I still could see the corpse at a great distance below the surface—stationary—neither rising to the surface nor sinking to the unfathomed depths of the great deep.

It was but the commencement of a new career in life; from this moment I became acquainted with death, and I soon lost my respect for it, or my apprehension when I saw it. Day after day we lost a slave; the calm still remained,—

"And ocean slumber'd like an unwean'd child."

At last one of the crew, who had become delirious from drinking salt-water, died, and preparations were making to dispose of the body with all possible speed, for the men all seemed

aware that the same chance might befall them, and they liked not the warning always visible. No thief gazes with rapture on a gallows; and no heartless tyrant, or shivering coward, admires the view of death, for *that* he knows must overcome him; and all his vauntings and fears, he feels, are useless against the power of that, which leads captivity captive!

I thought I perceived some emotion of fear, as two or three of the men, who could handle a palm and needle, set to work to sow the corpse in canvass, and to affix a couple of shot to his feet. The workmen proceeded in silence, and stitched as quickly as possible, being evidently very much disgusted with their occupation. The task performed, the corpse was put upon a grating, and the ensign of the Rapid was placed over it, the captain desired that the bell might be tolled, and to my very great astonishment he produced a Prayer Book. I never thought we had so much salvation on board, for several Sundays had passed, and certainly I never had perceived much religious feeling, either in word or deed, on board that hated vessel.

The body was placed upon the same gangway from which we had launched the negro, but very different was the respect paid to the white man. A rope's-end from a small coil was fastened to the grating, the bell was stilled, and Captain Smith, with a most sanctified air read the service: the crew appeared not only attentive but moved by the ceremony, and some, in compliment to their departed friend, had dressed themselves in their best clothes. The captain stopped and nodded to the mate, the flag was withdrawn, and the grating and the corpse fell into the water. It was as dead a calm as ever seaman knew; the sea was like a polished mirror, not a cloud darkened the smallest spot, the sails were motionless, and an ensign which had been hoisted previously to the funeral, hung like a rope from the peak—it was a sad and dismal sight.

The little stock of water got gradually less, and day after day a greater reduction took place in the allowance. The crew spent their time in gazing upon the horizon; they took their food not at regular times, as was cus-

tomary ; all the friendship, all the good fellowship between them seemed fast dissolving, and now that Death had claimed his first victim, the long suppressed silence was broken, and mutiny and discord began to reign.

At first the storm only manifested itself in trifling discontent ; the men, as they formed themselves in groups, talked loudly of their sufferings from the privation of water ; then at the little they received for the dangers they braved ; then at the calm being a judgment of God upon them for having assisted the captain in his half-murderous intention when the poor slaves were headed in the casks and turned adrift ; then they anticipated the horrors of a farther reduction, the increased deaths amongst themselves, and then they spoke right out of open mutiny, of seizing the ship, of murder, of breaking open the fore-hold and of drinking one good draught even if they died of thirst a day after.

" How many miles," said one, " do you fancy we are from that Hell-hole where we got these devils from ?"

"Two hundred if we are an inch," was the reply.

"We could not pull that distance in the boats, do you think we could, Jim?"

"It would be hard and dry work."

"How much water do you think there is on board?"

"Only two tuns at the most, and if this cursed calm still continues, what are we to do?"

"Why, murder the slaves to be sure, and seize the ship; we can live long enough then on the water, and I suppose there must be a breeze here once a twelvemonth at least."

"Yes, but," said another, "if we wait inactive until the water is all gone, we shall share the same fate as the slaves; it will then be too late to put our plans in force; we must begin directly, or we must die."

This conversation took place on the larboard side of the forecastle, close to the end of the booms; and I, as if destined always to be a bird of ill omen, had been stretched out under the bows of the long-boat, endeavouring to get

to sleep, but the thoughts of our situation had at first hindered that very effectually, and the alarming crisis now brought so near at hand, kept me on the broad watchfulness of despair.

"I tell you," said the last man, "we had better begin to-night; if we can get rid of the captain and the mate, we can then make short work of it, but without that we shall never succeed, for the captain still clings to the idea of money by his black cargo, and he never will consent to part with the chance of his profit until we are starved in waiting."

"Blow me," said the first man, "if I don't think Jim was an attorney."

This produced a kind of feverish laugh, which was soon over; for, although the joke were ever so good, they were in no laughing mood to enjoy it.

"Why, I do know something about the law of self-preservation, and I have seen better days than these; but it is no time for joking now. What say you to my proposition to *seize* the captain and the mate, bundle the blacks overboard, and then wait for a breeze?"

" It will be a rough murder," said the man who enacted carpenter, and who seemed more disposed to try some more moderate remedy, which was to wait another day, and then, as he said, " to saw wood upon the whole of them."

" Yes but, Master Chips," said the attorney, " two tun of water amongst two hundred and sixty souls is not much, even at a quarter of a pint a day, and he must be a woodcock indeed to live on that."

" Why, do those birds never drink?" asked the first man.

" No one never saw the like of it," was the reply; " they live entirely upon suction, but take so little that a thimble-full would serve one a year."

" Well then," said Chips, " I wish I was a woodcock."

" But," returned the attorney, " we must not go to work blindfolded. How many of us are agreed to this manner of proceedings? why, we are but eight here in all, so there are sixteen against us, without counting the captain, his son, the mate, and that shrivelled herring,

young Bob. Then, when we have done for the slaves, those two boys, and one or two of our own, who won't like this death without benefit of clargy, we shall have enough to last out a fortnight longer, or we might take to the pinnace and rig an awning over her."

"She is as leaky as a sieve," said the carpenter; "they have never kept any water in her, and the sun has nearly split the planks; she would not be seaworthy for at least a couple of days."

"Well, Jim! now let us hear you make it quite clear, that we have a right to commit this murder; and if you can do that, you are the best of sea-lawyers."

The sea-attorney's argument merely went to this:—"that self-preservation was the first law of nature;" and it was evident that law could only be observed by the desperate act already proposed.

"I 'm blessed if he is not a real sea-solicitor," replied the carpenter; "but how are we to manage this business?"

"Oh, easy enough!" replied Jim; "the captain always goes to bed at nine o'clock, and

at twelve, when the mate is called, we can put both to rest, *for dead men tell no tales.*"

"I 'm not for that," said one, "I am only for seizing them; for if so be we gags the captain and mate, we might find the navigation rather difficult."

"Let 's get them first," said Jim, "and the rest will be easily done."

At this moment another of the crew, who had been sitting on the starboard side under the shade of the foremast, came round, and the conversation dropped, Jim merely remarking, "that he had no objection to call the watch at the time proposed;" the hint was taken, and the carpenter was appointed to handle the commander,* as he was much in the habit of managing that at all times.

No sooner had the mutineers decamped, than I stole aft on the quarter-deck near the companion; and having heard my own doom pronounced, I fell into a state of dejection, which terminated in a flood of tears.

Poverty, it is said, makes us acquainted with

* A commander is a kind of a mallet.

strange bed-fellows, and misery oftentimes makes a friend: accustomed as I was to the scorn of one and the rebuke of another, I hardly hoped to find a man to compassionate my misfortunes. I was withering fast away, and yet I bore up better against the deprivation than others whose strength was greater and whose frame was more robust. I was sitting on a coil of rope abreast of the companion, my eyes suffused with tears, unable to reconcile any particular course to my mind, when the captain came on deck. I never saw him so dejected; he walked aft and looked at the calm horizon, then gazed at the sky, as if vainly persuading himself that he saw some light scud aloft; he turned from the bright and unpromising scene and looked towards the gangway, where some of the men were handing overboard another negro; his eye rested upon the dead for a moment, when he perceived me, and advanced towards the coil on which I was sitting. I expected my usual salutation, but to my great astonishment he addressed me in a mild and consoling strain.

"I have been to blame, youngster," said he, "in bringing you into this distressing situation, and I fear you are not strong enough to bear up much longer against the greater deprivation which must ensue; but keep up your courage as long as you can, and we may yet live to have a greater allowance to-morrow."

"To-morrow, sir," I replied, "we shall not want it, unless something is done immediately."

"Poor fellow!" he said, as he turned away, "he is quite incoherent."

A quarter-deck walk is never very long, so in two moments more the captain was close to me again.

"Come, youngster," he said, "go below and lie down; don't sit here in the sun, it will make you worse."

I replied, "it did not signify;" but looking imploringly in his face, I said in a low tone of voice, "Oh, sir, I have such a secret to tell you before I die, but I am afraid of being overheard."

"Poor little fellow," said he, "come below and I'll give you a small drop of water, which

I can spare, and let me see if that will cheer you up."

It is but justice to Smith to say that he did not take one drop more than the smallest boy in the ship; he controlled his thirst better, from the evenness of his temper, and his not giving way to despondency; he tried every morning the plan of drinking by absorption, and recommended the crew to follow his example and bathe. Latterly however, some sharks were always hovering about the ship, apparently awaiting the arrival of a negro; and death, however horrible even by prolonged misery, can picture nothing so truly terrible as being the prey to those ravenous creatures, at the name of which the bravest man in the water would shudder with dismay. The captain therefore drew the water himself, and holding the bucket over his head reversed it, and enjoyed a shower-bath.

"Come, youngster," said he, as he stepped upon the companion-ladder, "I 'll give you all I can spare."

The captain now began to entice me by

soothing words, and I, hardly knowing what I did, followed him to his cabin: his son was lying full-length on the locker, his lips being much swollen, and apparently with a difficulty of respiration. The captain took from his scanty store about half a wine-glass of water, and was on the point of giving it to me, when his son jumped like a maniac from his reclining position and rushed to thwart the kind intentions of his father.

"Oh, father! father!" he said, "only give me one drop to wash my lips, for they burn—they burn!"

The glass was in my hands, whilst the frantic boy was kept at arm's-length by the captain. Although nearly exhausted with thirst, I mustered courage only to take a small half, and then gave the glass to the greatest tyrant that ever held dominion over me—I mean the captain's son. The captain was evidently much struck by the forgiveness of injuries thus expressed; and as his son hastily gulped down the water, he tapped me on the head and whispered, "Well done, my lad."

"Will you hear my secret now, sir?" I said, "for to-morrow it will be useless."

"Begin, youngster," said he, "but you had better sleep and not talk, for the less you speak the more you will escape the thirst."

I beckoned to his son, and said, "Not before him; I would not say a word before any one but yourself; we must be quite alone."

"Poor little fellow," said the captain, "another time will do as well," and he turned towards the companion to go on deck again. I caught him by the hand and said, I suppose with some energy, "As you value your life and ours, sir, listen to me, only for two minutes, and alone."

It was almost in vain I solicited; but at last, as if more to comply with the half-frantic wish of a dying boy than in the belief that I had anything serious to disclose, he persuaded his son to lie down on deck in the shade, and I began my intelligence with a very short preface. "I am not," I said, "quite so nearly gone as you think, but neither you nor I will outlive this night if you do not believe what I

am about to tell you." I then told him every word I had overheard, when the conversation took place, and where I was concealed.

At first, the captain attributed the whole secret to the first signs of insanity, at which stage the sufferer almost invariably believes that a conspiracy has taken place against him, and that his best friend is his worst enemy. This bore strictly on my case; for the very man I pointed out as the ringleader, was the man who had been the kindest to me: it was self-preservation, which made me guilty of ingratitude; and a hope of altogether stopping the cruel murder, that prompted me to break the silence I had at first imposed upon myself. The captain cross-examined me for more than a quarter of an hour, having, during the questions, led me away from the subject, and actually enticed me to speak of my father; but when he returned to the point I never varied the least. Convinced at last that I was perfectly sane, he called the mate, and placing him opposite me, said, "Mate, this youngster has detected the most diabolical plan formed by

that villanous sea-attorney, James Waters;—why, they propose to murder both of us to-night, to throw all the slaves overboard, and then, if possible, to fit the pinnace for the journey, get into her, and push off for the coast." The mate's face expressed incredulity, and in a rough manner, but checked occasionally by the captain, he began an examination. I never varied the least. I told him who had engaged to murder him, and who had volunteered to enact the same execution on the captain.

"Well, youngster," said the captain, "can you keep the secret?"

"So well," I replied, "that I had resolved to keep it altogether, had not your kindness of manner determined me, if possible, to save your life."

"Then go on deck and be silent," said the captain.

"No no!" said the mate, "this is no time to leave any thing to chance: why, by his account, I have only six hours to live; we had better at once counteract their plan."

"And how is it to be done? the youngster

said that eight *had agreed*, and long before this time many more must have joined."

"Suppose," said the mate, "we were to get them aloft to take a reef in, and then seize them; the arms are all here, loaded and ready."

The captain shook his head; "Taking a reef in looks very suspicious in a calm; and besides, the very men we arm may have consented to join them; that bait will never succeed."

"Suppose we release," said the mate, "some of the slaves and arm them?"

"Worse and worse," replied the captain; "those poor devils are almost dead from exhaustion, and, if released, are as likely to turn upon us as upon them. I see nothing left for it but one thing, which is, to guide the storm we cannot control. Suppose we get all hands on the quarter-deck, mention to them the quantity of water remaining on board, our distance from the land, and the necessity of something being done, and done directly. Have you served out the allowance of water yet?"

"No, sir," replied the mate; "it is now

the time, and they will be mad under any delay."

"Then serve it directly," said the captain, "and when that is done, they will be in the more quiet mood to hear reason: but I will speak to you again afterwards. My little lad," said he to me, "remain here below, I will bring you your allowance: and, mate," he continued, "don't begin to serve the water out until I come."

The mate went on deck, and gave directions for the seamen to receive their allowance, which was a gill each, one gill having been served at noon. The men attended with a dogged silence; they seemed to take the scanty drop as if resolved very shortly to have more; they murmured not as usual: some, when the water was given them, drank it off at one swallow, and looked with a leering eye at their companions; and these men the quick eye of the captain recognized as those mentioned by me: some sipped a drop or two, and carried the rest away with the utmost caution; and two stayed, and begged and implored to have the

smallest portion more. Each man retired with his allowance or his empty cup. The captain beckoned the mate to follow him, and he said, "Besides Ganjam's eight, three more have joined; we have only one course to pursue, which is, to sacrifice the slaves."

"That 's no great sin," said the mate; "a hundred or two black fellows never will be missed, and we must manage to get some more on board after we have got into port."

"I cannot think of any other plan," resumed the captain; "the case is very desperate. You see the men have grown quite indifferent to the women, and they look on Death as a neighbour much too close to be pleasant. You'll stand by me to the last?" said the captain, fixing his eagle eyes upon the mate, as if to look into his very soul; "we might as well be killed on deck, as murdered in our beds!"

The mate replied in a firm voice, "Never fear me, I 'll stand by you to the last."

"Then," said the captain, "let 's keep Ganjam in the cabin ready to hand up the pistols, and get the men on deck as quickly as possible.

When the summons for all hands to go aft was repeated round the deck, it was easy to see that not a moment was to be lost in making the communication proposed. Eleven men stood close together, Waters being rather in advance of them, whilst the rest straggled one from the other; the captain placed himself just before the companion, his son being seated close to him, whilst the mate was about a pace in the rear towards me. I put my head up to listen, having in both hands a pistol, which I kept out of sight. Captain Smith was a regular sailor's orator; he knew exactly how to lead them by words, and he addressed himself to the mutineers with the air of a friend. "I hope, my lads," he began, "that ever since we sailed together, you have found me bear all your misfortunes in the same proportion as yourselves, and that I never asked one of you to do, what I was afraid to do myself. We have got into a devil of a scrape now, and I want your assistance to get us out of it. You are aware that we have not much water on board; in short, it is of no use to blind you to your situation,

each succeeding day sees us in a worse condition than the day which is passed, and if this calm were to continue two days longer, I need not tell you what must be the consequence. We are twenty-four in number belonging to the vessel, besides the slaves; our water is very nearly run out; and although only two hundred miles from the land, yet we are in a state of absolute ruin; for a fortnight, we have remained as stationary as if we were at anchor, and, if the calm remains, we have only the hope that by great exertion we may reach the land. We have still water enough for ourselves for at least ten days more, but we have on board nearly upwards of two hundred human beings, and, if they share with us all that remains, we have not enough for three days, with the utmost possible care, and a farther reduction of allowance. Now, my lads, as this is a case where it is evident we must either sacrifice the slaves, or take to the boat and leave them to chance succour, I do not feel disposed to bear the blame myself of such a destruction. I should like each of you to give me your opi-

nion, and I pledge myself to act with the majority. I have seen your depression of spirits, and have only wondered how you have borne up so well against the miseries which have surrounded you ; but you are English sailors, and I never yet saw the real Old English tar that did not hold up the better, the more the storm of adversity assailed him. Now, do you speak out like men ; make up your minds to the course you intend me to follow, and you know enough of John Smith to be satisfied that he will not strike his colours, although the difficulties and dangers were fifty times greater than they are at this moment. I give you half an hour to talk over the subject, in the discussion of which neither the mate nor myself will take the smallest part ; be quick therefore, and make up your minds."

CHAPTER VIII.

Treason and murder, ever kept together,
As two yoke-devils sworn to either's purpose,
Working so grossly in a natural cause
That admiration did not whoop at them.

Henry V.

The captain and the mate walked aft towards the taffrail, and were in deep conversation: the men all seemed to flock round Waters, who now appeared the leader of the crew, and some minutes elapsed before any opinion was suggested. As for the captain, he had made up his mind not to be innocently butchered; the mate looked on the whole business with the eye of the most careless indifference. I heard him say, "As for negroes, who cares a curse about them but the devil? and we can oblige him by sending more than he wants all

at once. I think they would all be dead by the day after to-morrow if we went on as we are now going." Captain Smith was silent, and looked very resolute, but very desponding.

"Now," said Waters, "my lads, now is the time to speak out like men, and not to be starved like rats. It's evident something must be done, and we have the choice of three evils: either all hands to perish together; or to bundle the blacks overboard, which I don't think, on this occasion, could be called murder; or to take to the boat, with lots of water, and pull to the shore."

"That last is no use at all, Waters," said one; "for if we are to leave the blacks without any water, they must perish: so that I think, if we decide to destroy them, either one way or the other, either by giving them more water than they want, or giving them none at all, it amounts to one and the same thing."

"I'm for beginning, and putting them out of their sufferings," said Waters; "I dare say, by the row they are kicking up, two or three more are ready for the sharks; and by the Lord, some

of you had better look out, or you'll be making a mess for those large-jawed gentlemen. Come, who 's going to speak first?"

"I am," replied one of the crew. "Suppose, instead of butchering all the slaves, we were to get rid of all those who are so ill as to be past the hope of recovery, and allow the others to have another day's chance: you see, if they are to die, one day can make no difference."

"That is a good proposition," replied two or three together.

"But who is to be doctor and give his opinion as to the case?" said Waters: "I think we had better appoint the one who made the proposition."

This was unanimously agreed to: Waters then continued, "Well, let it be so; and if to-morrow we have no luck, why, then we will decide as to the rest." At this moment Smith had advanced near the crew, in order to catch a word or two, when Waters told him that they had agreed amongst themselves, and mentioned the above plan.

"I think it a very good one," said the

captain, "and, therefore, the sooner we begin the better."

The newly appointed doctor descended into the hold, the rest of the crew standing round the combings of the main hatchway to hand up the victims. Eight were handed up dead, stiff, and cold: they must have died the day previous, for a very strong proof of putridity escaped with their presence Even the stoutest heart seemed to fail: their poor emaciated bodies told the dumb tale of all their sufferings. They were thrown overboard with all the unfeelingness of men whose feelings are blunted by starvation; it was done very speedily, and then a living man was handed on deck. Living he was, and that was all. Life's last light was almost shut out for ever; the poor creature seemed a skeleton, and was so weak as to be unable to stand; it was evident his exit was near, without human murderers to aid. The victim seemed to smile languidly, and I verily believe there was not a man on board that did not compassionate his misfortunes: he was placed for the moment on the quarter-

deck, and soon had a companion as ill as himself ready for the living grave.

"Sir! sir!" said I, as the captain came towards me, "save those poor wretches—let them die without our sins being increased, or give them the chance that awaits those below. They have all of them had their allowance of water for to-night, and none is served out until nine o'clock to-morrow; between this and that hour, a breeze may spring up, or it may have pleased God to release some of these half-dead, miserable men, and thus we may escape a portion of the mischief."

"Well said, my little fellow; you have saved more than one to-night; 'tis a very good idea. Here, Waters," said the captain, "what say you to this proposition?—to let these poor fellows die on deck to-night, instead of throwing them overboard; and if we get no wind before the time of serving out the water, why then we must follow up our plan."

"There can be no objection to that," said Waters; "and in order to give as many as possible a chance, we had better bring some

more on deck; it will relieve those below; and at any rate, die or no die, they will be more comfortable whilst they live, if they call breathing living."

"And," resumed the captain, "they cannot create any confusion, poor creatures!"

Night now began to throw its darkness over the waste of waters; the watch, as usual, had been set; the weary had betaken themselves to sleep, and a silence, unusual at so early an hour, hushed our feelings into an awful reverence for our dreadful situation. The most desperate in wickedness quailed under the idea of the wholesale murder about to be committed with the rising sun; and some, whose hearts were not inured to these scenes of wretchedness, strove to remember their almost-forgotten prayers. There she lay, like an ark on the waters, as still as the winds—she was motionless. The decks had been long neglected, the ropes had remained triced up in their coils, the sails hung idly down; the silence was equal to the calm, save that now and then a feeble struggle for breath escaped from the negroes,

or the rattle of death sounded its quivering warning in the throat of the dying.

It was such a night, and I stood alone, gazing on all the darkness allowed to be visible. I felt a greater joy at that moment than I had ever experienced. I had saved the life of him who had inflicted the greatest woes on me: it was a proud consideration, and the lurkings of revenge were hushed in the benefits I had bestowed. I felt that, if the worst of deaths came upon me, I had done one good action. Oh! how my memory revisited the scenes of my childhood: how, in that dark and solemn hour, the thoughts of past pleasures rushed over my mind, and pictured all I had lost, and all I might have enjoyed! Oh! how I recalled all the kindness of my mother; and then how suddenly the scene changed, and murder, for self-preservation, shook over me the black mantle of despair!

I had remained about half an hour lost to all the horrors around me, when the moon suddenly appeared above the horizon; it seemed to cast a wide and tender light to soften down the

hoar austerity of present desolation; it rose clear and beautiful, and the stars studded the heavens. I looked around me: the mate, who had charge of the watch, was fast asleep in the netting: not far from him, and close to the very gangway over which we had thrown so many of our shipmates, was Waters; he was disencumbered of his conscience, and slept like an infant: on the larboard side of the quarter-deck were the negroes, ten of them lying fore and aft the deck, all quiet: no one stood by the wheel,—that was left to itself. I walked forward with cautious step, for I feared to break the repose which was around me: even the slaves slept. On the forecastle the watch were dozing, and I made the round of the deck unperceived, as I thought, by all. I returned to the taffrail, and again began to meditate on our present lot and our probable destiny.

I must have remained in my reverie for an hour, at which time I was startled by the appearance of something moving on the larboard netting. It was the captain, who was rather too good a judge of human nature to slumber when

his men had actually proposed to murder him: he said in a low voice, "What are you watching, youngster?" I replied, that "a cloud was rising under the moon, but so slowly as to be nearly motionless." He jumped from the netting, and giving me a pistol, which he told me to place below, fixed his eyes upon our only hope. I soon returned by his side: slowly and gradually the horizon became darkened; a large cloud had risen, and was spreading far and wide. We immediately awoke the mate, and told him to get a hand or two aloft to furl the top-gallant sails: the fore-topmast stay-sail was set, and, as the clouds began to look blacker and blacker, the top-sails were reefed, and everything made ready for a squall. It was surprising to see the animation with which the crew worked. The watch below, on hearing the mate give orders relative to the sails, were on deck in a minute; every eye was turned towards the quarter from which the wind and the more welcome rain were expected; the sky was overcast, and yet not a drop fell, and not a breeze ruffled the smooth face of the waters.

Towards midnight a slight flow of wind appeared on the surface, the yards were braced up on the larboard-tack, and very shortly afterwards the Rapid began to move, and we again heard the welcome noise of the water breaking under her bows, and saw the white bubbles pass the gangways. A course was instantly shaped for the nearest land; a slight drizzling rain began to fall, and deliverance was at hand. At two A.M. it began to rain hard. The awning was instantly spread, a small hole was cut in it amidships, a shot was suspended so as to form the canvass into a kind of funnel, buckets were placed underneath, and every drop was caught that dripped through the hole. The slaves below, on hearing the water splash on the deck, became clamorous, and strove to break adrift: it was decided to let about twenty on deck at a time. No sooner were they released than they threw themselves on their faces and licked the cool moisture with the greediness of hounds after a long run; they rolled their fevered bodies over and over, and laughed with horrible insanity. In the mean time the crew

were not idle; when the first bucket was filled they drank its contents almost instantaneously: some dipped in a tin pannakin, and hastily applied it to their lips; others lapped it from the bucket, and although it was nauseous in the extreme, from the very strong taste and smell of tar, yet it was devoured with a relish no nectar could have given. I had got a towel which had become saturated with the rain, and cringing abaft on the starboard-quarter, gratified my thirst from the stream I strained from that, and afterwards from the drops which fell from the boom main-sail, as it bagged to leeward. In a short time, from the quantities that fell, we were all in high spirits, and talked and laughed as if we were in an enviable situation. With the dawn of day the wind rather increased, and the rain, which had fallen in torrents, began to clear away; four of the negroes were dead on deck, and these we committed to the deep without the smallest ceremony.

At noon, by the observation, we were only distant from the land one hundred and thirty

miles, and, at the rate we were running, the next day would have seen us in sight and at anchor; but the course we were steering took us to that part to the northward of Loango, where there is no harbour or roadstead, yet it was decided by the captain that we had better get close to the land, in order, if possible, to land and recruit the slaves, as well as to get a supply of water. We had, during the shower that fell, increased our stock enough for two or three days at half allowance. We carried on a press of canvass, and as the breeze increased, the Rapid was going at the rate of nine and sometimes ten knots, so that at midnight it was judged advisable to shorten sail to the top-sails and fore-topmast staysail, and at two A.M. we hove-to with our head off shore. As pre-cautionary measure, we tried for soundings, when to our great astonishment we found our-selves in seven fathoms water. The moon was up, and no land was visible, but the blue of deep water seemed to have changed to a brown colour; we sounded again, and we shoaled the water to six fathoms, again to a-half, five. We then shaped a course exactly parallel to the one

we had come in shore upon, but we did not deepen the water until about four o'clock, when the day began to break, then we wore round and stood again towards the land. At six we saw it, about ten miles distant, quite low and sandy, without any marks of vegetation, and apparently without inhabitants. At eight we anchored off a low projecting point, on the very verge of which stood a clump of trees: here it was resolved to dig for water, and, accordingly, the pinnace was hoisted out, and the other boats got ready for that service. It was also the intention of the captain to land the slaves and purify the vessel before we made another run, for they were so sickly, and the vessel so remarkably dirty, from the inability of the men to work at all during the calm, that I question whether, if a bird had flown over the vessel, it would not have died of the pestilential vapour.

The first operation was easily effected—that of digging a well in the sand: a cask with a number of holes bored in the sides was then sunk, and as the water oozed through the sand, or filtered from the ocean, it created a kind of

spring, the water being quite fresh, clear, and good. It has been remarked by the shrewd observer, that wherever a tree grows on a low sandy soil, there, provided you are near the sea, water perfectly fresh may be procured, if a filtration from the ocean, or, in reality, a sprig diffusing itself through the sand, has not been discovered; but the practice of thus procuring water during the American war was very common, especially on St. George's Island in the Potowmac. We sank seven wells, and before sunset they were all full. In the mean time a spare top-sail and some other sails were landed and spread under the trees; some apologies for tents were made; and before dark, the slaves, with the exception of one or two of the women, were landed, and a small number of armed men were placed as sentinels. This precaution was vain, for, independently of the extreme lassitude of these poor emaciated creatures, we found that they were landed on an island, the in-shore side of which was defended by deep waters: we therefore sounded for a passage, in order to place the Rapid in security,

either from the vigilance of the cruisers, or the roll of the sea, should the breeze have shifted and blown from the westward.

We had now been at anchor three days, the vessel had been properly cleaned, and we lost our offensive smells; the water was nearly completed, but the slaves were in so sickly a state, that to have embarked them immediately would have been to insure their destruction: the captain therefore determined, on the following day, early in the morning, before the breeze freshened and the sun was too oppressive, to tow or run the Rapid into the shelter afforded by the island, the channel to which we had sufficiently ascertained.

As the mosquitoes had become so excessively troublesome, our crew, with the exception of two or three men, always slept on board; the voracious bloodsuckers, it is true, followed us to our ship, but not so as particularly to annoy us; whilst the men who slept on shore, if they did sleep, were generally brought on board in a fever the following day, from the unceasing irritation produced by these tiny enemies. We

left two of the wells and broke up the others, and on every evening we landed the provisions for the slaves the following day : these precautions were taken in order to keep the people out of the sun, for the crew were by no means free from sickness.

We hove the brig to a short stay-peak before we were sent to our hammocks. The captain and the mate were regaling themselves with some brandy-and-water, and had planned an excursion on shore in order to steal, or procure, as they mildly termed it, some fresh provisions. They knew that all along the coast some wretches are to be found, who live either by fishing, or on the common fruits of the country, which grow wild and plentifully along that miserably unhealthy shore. The mate kept the first watch, and the captain went to bed about ten o'clock ; one man was placed to keep a look-out on the forecastle, and to answer in case the men on shore should hail, for we were so close that a voice could be easily heard in the stillness of the night. About midnight some lightning appeared to the eastward, very vivid and forked, but, as this in sultry coun-

tries is as common as the land-breeze, it was not heeded, or at any rate did not attract any particular attention, or excite any apprehension. The captain had left word that he would keep a look-out during the middle watch, and he was standing on the larboard gangway looking over the side in a pensive mood. The mate was close beside him, and was just going to lie down on deck, the heat being unusually oppressive, when on turning round towards the forecastle, he ejaculated, " Holy Father, what darkness !" The captain looked up, and beheld a cloud, as dark as a black pall, just beginning to shade the moon : the cloud rose quickly and spread over the land, indicating a squall of no common power.

The crew were without loss of time summoned upon deck, hands were placed by the other anchor, whilst some were told to be ready and veer away some more cable ; but, as we lay perfectly becalmed, it was useless to attempt that operation until the breeze came. The lightning became doubly strong, and strange noises, like the sudden rush of wind, were heard over our heads, as the whole scene seemed suddenly

changed, and from a calm and still night, the twinkling stars and shining moon, darkness was over all, excepting when the quick and brilliant flash illumined the atmosphere, and then left it in tenfold obscurity. The mate suggested the necessity of getting one of the boats to the men on shore, in order that, should the ship be blown from her anchors, they might have the means of procuring food. The slaves were awaked by the brilliant flashes, and they howled a dreadfully monotonous note, which swept over the still waters and struck us as a funeral dirge. The precaution was too late when suggested; for scarcely had the captain assented to the necessity, when a flash of lightning burst full upon the ship; the thunder roared over our heads; the winds, uncertain from which quarter to bow, howled around us; the rain fell as if from a water-spout; and the Rapid jerked from one point to the other, snapped her cable, swamped her boats, which were fastened by their painters to the stern, and giving a sudden heel over to starboard drove out to sea.

Then was confusion at its height; no pen can adequately describe the vain attempts to restore order. The fore-top gallant-mast was blown over the side, snapped short off above the cap; the ropes, which had not been properly belayed, were flying away to leeward; and, O! God! the dreadful howl of the wind as it rushed over the reeling vessel, bringing with it immense quantity of sand, and almost blinding us with its strength! The cable was cut, and the painters of the boats gave way; the brig was free, but she lay over on her starboard side with her gunwales under, and an attempt to get her before the wind by means of the fore-topmast stay-sail was useless: the sail blew to ribbons in a second, and the bolt-rope only remained. The sailors cowered under the visitation of Providence; none would venture even in the fore-rigging to fasten some small canvass to the rattlings, in order to veer the ship's head round; they clung under the weather-bulwark; even the mate lost his courage, and the captain alone stood upright by the wheel, as if to dare the fury of the elements. Destruction

seemed at hand; the vessel was fairly on her beam-ends; the crew were useless from apprehension, and all the courage and commands of the captain were vain. At last came one gust of wind with a rush of rain, the sky was cleared to windward, and a calm followed. From all that was dark and dreary, we turned to a clear sky, a bright moon, and a perfect cessation from wind.

The courage of the seamen returned with the fine weather, and for a moment we were led to believe the mischief over; the clouds swept away to leeward, and all hands were employed to repair damages. We had not drifted off the bank, for we were in nine fathoms. The water was highly phosphorescent; and the sea, considering the momentary gale, and our vicinity to the shore, began to run high. It was judged useless to anchor, for we could not drift out to sea much during the next four hours; at the expiration of which we intended to beat back to the anchoring-ground, and endeavour to sweep for our lost small bower. The topsails were set, and as a light breeze came from

the land, we hauled close on a wind, keeping the Rapid under easy sail.

At two o'clock we were a perfect wreck, and nearly swamped. The men, from the fatigues of the day and the extra night-work, soon dozed into sleep, and one of the old seamen who had charge of the watch had imitated the sleepy example, and was soundly snoring, when both topsails were split to ribbons, the Rapid again on her beam-ends, the main-topmast gone, and the fore-topsail-yard carried away in the slings. This second squall had, like the first, sprung up in a moment unperceived; the damage was done before the calamity was expected. The Rapid was reeling like a drunken man. The squall settled into a regular hard gale of wind; the spray flew over the devoted vessel; and when the sun rose, red and fiery, the wind increased, if possible, and blew harder than ever my young imagination could conjecture.

Whatever could be done was done; the Rapid was made as snug as circumstances would permit, and she rode over the sea like a beautiful sea-bird as she was. We could show no

canvass, and had indeed very little to show; the trysail was bent, and at sunset we were just able to show a small reefed sail abaft; the sea had got fearfully high, and the wind, which was strong, came in heavy gusts, accompanied by just enough rain to feed it. A heavy shower at sea generally lays the wind, but a slight drizzle invariably tends to increase it.

It were useless to swell out our misfortunes by description: suffice it to say, that the third day that we had driven like a log on the water, the gale broke up, our rigging and sails were got to rights; by sunset on the fourth day we were under double-reefed tops, working back to the anchorage. We were more than one hundred miles from our slaves, and the captain was fearful that, long before we could return, the worst of horrors would have befallen those poor fellows, who seemed doomed to meet with more serious calamities from Providence than even man, armed with the tyranny of speculation, could inflict. We had only left them one day's provision, and we had now been absent four: supposing the wind to continue as it did, we cer-

tainly could not arrive before the expiration of two more. We carried as much sail as prudence dictated and necessity warranted, and took advantage of every deviation of wind which allowed us to look up better for our anchorage.

It was about midnight that one of the watch, who happened, quite accidentally, to look over the starboard quarter, discovered a strange sail; she looked very small and low, and excited no apprehension. The captain, however, by no means liked the report; as the vessel was in the rays of the moonshine, he discerned with the assistance of his day-glass that she was of a felucca rig, standing after us, and, from the press of sail, evidently in chase. I before mentioned that our guns had been thrown overboard with the exception of two; these, however, were regarded as our probable saviours from the grasp of the vessel astern, which was instantly recognized as a Spanish privateer, or pirate; which indeed were synonimous, provided the opportunity was good, and the bait sufficiently tempting. She neared us

fast in spite of our additional canvass, and by daylight we expected her to be alongside.

About half-past three, just as the first streak of daylight was visible, she tried her distance by firing a long gun: the shot, whizzing over the Rapid, fell harmless in the water about a quarter of a mile on the larboard bow. It was the first shot I had ever heard, and my heart palpitated with a fear hitherto unknown. I looked round at the captain for encouragement, but his thoughts were far otherwise employed than in catching from me either my feeling or boyish timidity.

"Get every body aft on the quarter-deck," said he, "and arm each man properly." They came, not with the desponding look of cowards, but with the flash of animation which courage gives: none seemed afraid; but each countenance bespoke a resolution which, by degrees, imparted itself to me. I felt assured that such men would never allow themselves to be conquered; and when I saw in what a careless manner they handled their cutlasses, and the perfect indifference with which they examined

their pistols and muskets, I was almost ashamed of my cowardice, and held out my hand for arms with some degree of confidence.

The captain smiled as he gave me a cutlass, and only remarked, " that I had more heart than strength."

It was now almost daylight: our crew amounted in all, including the captain and mate, to twenty-three; of these, six were still feeble from sickness, and not one was in full vigour; but still they deemed themselves an over-match for Spaniards, and I am confident never expected an attack: they concluded that, when the daylight was established, the warlike appearance of the Rapid would scare the pirate from his intentions. The captain, who knew that in the event of an action his chance was desperate, determined to have recourse to the old stratagem of wearing the best countenance, and of facing a danger from which he saw it was impossible to fly: he therefore ordered the men to stick out of each port-hole a breaker, on the head of which he painted a tompion in red; the crew were directed to

place the sponges and rammers in such a manner that our adversary should see them ; and when daylight dawned we tacked and stood towards the felucca, making more sail, as if in chase, and firing one of our two guns, at the same time hoisting an English white ensign and a long pendant.

This manœuvre had its effect for the moment ; the felucca, apprehensive she had made a mistake, tacked immediately, and seemed very anxious to effect an escape, which we were willing enough to facilitate ; and, by way of encouraging, we managed to tow a lower studding-sail overboard on the weather-quarter. The felucca was about two points on our lee-bow, going rap full with a fresh breeze, and we kept her in that point apparently to preserve the weather-gage, but in reality to tow our studding-sail unperceived ; by degrees, as the felucca increased her distance, she kept closer to the wind, until having fore-reached considerably, she tacked and crossed our bows out of range : we shifted our tow to the lee-beam, and congratulated ourselves

that our *ruse* had succeeded. When the Spaniard was exactly on our weather-beam he tacked and shortened sail, to ascertain his superiority as to sailing; and he kept, after he was assured of our inferiority, first edging down within very long range, and then hauling his wind, as if doubtful as to our being a man-of-war, or a vessel of inferior force to himself. As the wind had considerably died away, Captain Smith was resolved to make another demonstration as to force, in the shape of shaking a reef out: before, however, we began, he warned the men of the necessity of scudding up the rigging together, and doing the thing in a real man-of-war style, instructing them to come down by the topsail-halyards in order to run the sails up to the mast-head with proper rapidity. In this we again succeeded; the felucca seemed convinced that we were what we seemed, and when we fired another gun she made more sail, and crept farther up to windward.

But still she kept us well within sight, and never attempted to get away. This caused no

trifling uneasiness, for, although the Rapid looked very like a man-of-war, was neat in her rigging aloft, and showed, although they were *quakers*,* a row of teeth with ten ports of a side, still it was evident that the felucca was not entirely satisfied that we were what we appeared, or she would have availed herself of her speed, and very shortly have left us all alone on the waters.

It was past noon when she bore up and steered for us, showing a Spanish ensign, and, when within long point and blank range, she hauled upon a wind. We immediately began to fire; but the captain of the felucca, observing that the fire always came from the two foremost ports, although she was right a-beam of us, guessed we were a sheep in wolf's clothing, and concluded that we were not quite so strong as we wished him to believe: he therefore commenced firing himself from a long gun on a swivel which we saw between his masts. His first shot fell over us a long way to leeward, the second went

* Quakers are imitation guns.

through the main-topsail, and the third cut away the main-top-gallant yard: hands were immediately sent aloft to shift the yard, and they certainly evinced considerable alacrity in executing this duty. We now found that the felucca was resolved to maintain the fight; the captain therefore gave directions to haul the studding-sail on board, and we bore up and endeavoured to effect our escape. It was useless; the felucca sailed like a witch, and overhauled us fast, her decks appeared crowded with men, and we could distinctly see the flash of the sun as its rays fell on the cutlasses. Captain Smith now began a battle oration to his men. It ran thus:—

"My fine fellows, Fortune has again placed us in an awkward predicament, and certainly has not chosen the best time, in regard to us, to show her spite. I need not tell you, my gallant shipmates, what a desperate chance we have to contend against; for pirates, and this felucca is one, take good care not to have many witnesses against them in the event of their success. 'Dead men,' they say, 'tell no tales;'

and, therefore, no sooner are the pirates in possession of their prize, than they murder the crew, and after plundering the vessel generally burn them. I could, my lads, tell of cruelties practised by these ruffians, which would be sufficient to make a lamb fight, or, rather to fall under the knife in open contest, than be butchered in cold blood; but I know you all well enough; the little Rapid will not be taken without a struggle, and I know you will fight to the last. If it was probable that any advantage would result from showing the felucca we were not worth the loss of blood which must follow, I would cheerfully heave to, and allow her boat to come on board; but if once they are satisfied that we are unable to make a good resistance, that instant our lives would not be, in their estimation, of the value of a straw. It is not the first time we have had a brush of this kind, and I have seen you stand firm under a worse danger; so now, my lads, let us think only on the certainty of our success. When she ranges up alongside, you will find me at my post; I am not afraid

that I shall not be well supported. So," said he in conclusion, "now for the trial: they may be more in number, but you all know that one Englishman is worth three Spaniards, and the odds are not more than that, I am sure. Stand firm for the first attack; only beat them back once, and they will never hazard it again. Look at that flag, my gallant fellows," said he, pointing to the ensign; "that flag alone will make us nearly a match for the pirates, and our determination and our courage shall do the rest."

No cheer followed the close of the speech, —no one started forward to re-echo the spirited words; the crew were evidently crest-fallen and beaten before the action began; and when the grape-shot, which the chase now and then honoured us with, flew over the ship, the dastardly crew cowered under the bulwarks; some called out to heave to and surrender, and, with the exception of the captain and the mate, there was not a countenance which did not seem blanched with fear. Young as I was, I saw what the result would be. The

felucca gained on us rapidly, and by four o'clock in the afternoon she was within half-pistol shot on our larboard quarter, steering right alongside of us, and showing evident intentions of boarding.

CHAPTER IX. *

In vain, in vain; alas! ye gallant few;
From rank to rank your volleying thunder flew.

CAMPBELL.

As the action was inevitable, it was judged prudent to avail ourselves of all advantages; we therefore began a pretty brisk fire of musketry, our two guns were brought aft, and our utmost care was used in vain to hit either a mast or a yard on the felucca. The chase was growing fast to a close, the wind had died away, and the sea no longer was running high. The captain called his men aft, formed them into two divisions, one of which he headed him-

* The events recorded in this chapter actually befell the St. Helena schooner and her crew: they were captured by a Spanish pirate, but did not make the most decided resistance.

self, and kept close under the starboard bulwark; the other was under the command of the mate, and was kept on the gangway, in order to repel the felucca's men, should they board farther forward than was anticipated. She steered gallantly for the quarter, and, running alongside of us, began the contest by instantly jumping on board the Rapid. Some endeavoured and ultimately succeeded in fastening the felucca's larboard-bow to the main channels of the Rapid. The first Spaniard who planted his foot on the deck, was dead before he could strike a blow. The captain, who stood as calmly as a statue, awaited his coming; but the instant he had jumped from the netting, and before he reached the deck, a cutlass was thrust up to the hilt in his body. The next man was seriously wounded and disabled. But they came on fearlessly: the increase of numbers soon overcame all resistance, and they effected a landing on the starboard side of the quarter-deck. Our men gradually gave way; and I, dreadfully frightened at the approach of our enemies, ran up the larboard

main rigging, and sheltered myself in the main-top. The smoke from the firing covered my retreat ; and when, panting with fear and anxiety, I had squeezed myself through lubber's hole, and had thrown myself flat down, I saw Waters in the same position, watching the fight, from the starboard side of the top. I observed the fray, which thus continued. The party belonging to the mate joined that of the captain, and they made a vigorous charge aft. The captain calling out for some one to cut away the peak and throat halyards, so as to let the boom mainsail down on the heads of the Spaniards, Waters instantly took his knife, saying, — "That is a good thought!" but he unfortunately cut the peak halyards first: — down went the peak, but it jammed the jaws of the gaff so close against the mast, that, when the throat halyards were cut, the sail still remained suspended. Had the captain charged as the peak fell, he might have dislodged his adversaries, for they were for a moment embarrassed by the loose canvass; but they instantly advanced, and, form-

ing a double line abreast of the companion, they not only withstood the attack, but succeeded in repulsing the crew. The mate, with some hands, had made an attempt by endeavouring to get aft the larboard side, and a man to man fight ensued. The Spaniards, who had wound round their left arms a kind of blanket, called a poncho, which is generally worn over the shoulders, used this as a shield, stopping every blow by offering their left arms, thus guarded, to the strong blow of the cutlass, when they rushed on, and with short daggers generally succeeded in their work of destruction. Both divisions of the Rapid's men were now on the gangways, when Captain Smith made another desperate charge to beat back his foes: — no words can tell how gallantly, how gloriously he strove against his cloud of enemies; no numbers could force him back; and although assailed at one time by no less than four, he bravely stood his ground. He had raised his arm to strike to the deck the captain of the Spanish privateer, when one of the Spaniards interposed, and

for a moment, by entangling the cutlass, left the whole person of the captain defenceless; his son at that instant crept under his arm, and shot the interposing person, who fell. The crew, reanimated by the gallantry of the action, cheered aloud, and, had not fresh assistance come from the felucca at that moment, I think we might yet have won the day. The rush of the fresh men prevented the retreat of the front rank; and, urged on from behind, they advanced in spite of Smith, and in a few seconds our men were again on the gangways. Both parties seemed nearly vanquished by fatigue, and for the space of a couple of minutes a cessation of hostilities took place. To me, this was the most dreadful sight: the Spaniards from the felucca still continued to strengthen their party by adding fresh numbers; the vessels were alongside of each other, and I could see on the decks of the pirates, still more men than were sufficient at the beginning of the conflict to have captured the Rapid. I saw how perfectly useless was the struggle, and I knew what must be the re-

sult. Our men appeared dispirited, all but the captain: he cheered them on; he pointed to those he had slain; he urged the men to another more desperate attempt; he told them that the worst of deaths awaited their cowardice; and it were ten thousand times better to fall in the moment of battle, than coldly and deliberately to be exposed to the brutal violence and unrelenting butchery of the Spaniards. "Come on! come on!" he cried; and waving his sword, advanced amongst the enemies: he was followed by his men, who tried all that desperation could effect to change the fortune of the day — but too late — the Spaniards, flushed with the success of their having gained the quarter-deck, stood firm against the assault of the crew, succeeded in repulsing them, and then followed up their advantage.

Ah! this is indeed the secret of success in life! when once the first step is gained, persevere — never relax — and the conquest is certain; only give one moment's breathing-time for the cool calculation of the other

party, only allow the kind intervention of your most sincere friend, and, my life to the value of a chestnut, you fail; — success must be gathered on the instant; follow up the first false step of your adversary, and he is ruined!

As the Rapid's men gave ground, the Spaniard's persevered in pressing them the closer. On the gangways the fight was long sustained, until by the accumulation of numbers, overpowered by the fresh force, and sinking under fatigue and exhaustion, our men made a precipitate retreat to the forecastle. Here again they rallied, but for a short space of time: the day was won; all chances gone; the craven spirit had manifested itself, and one by one the crew retreated down the fore hatchway.

No sooner was their retreat perceived by the Spaniards than they made a desperate rush on the remainder; and after a fruitless effort for success, and the last defiance of Smith, he presented his pistol at his nearest

foe,—it missed fire; he threw the unfaithful weapon full in the face of his adversary, and before the man could recover from the blow, the captain had followed his men below, and the enemy were in undisputed possession of the upper deck. They instantly placed the hatches on, and nailed them, and then quietly sat down and refreshed themselves: their enemies were safe; no farther resistance of any consequence could be made; the victors were preparing their last revenge; and very shortly I was doomed to be the witness of unparalleled cruelty and demoniacal barbarity.

With what a searching eye did I sweep the horizon in hopes of discovering a strange sail!—but none was visible; I saw but the picture of eternity in the never-ending waters; the sun was sinking in all its glorious splendour, never again to gladden the eyes of many, and even the bright tints which streaked some of the higher clouds seemed but a mockery of a future promise; my heart sank within

me, and a deep deep sigh escaped. Waters looked at me, and bade me be still as death, or that our murder would follow: he hardly dared to articulate the words, and my fears were increased tenfold from the despairing look of my comrade.

On the quarter-deck there lay five dead Spaniards; the wounded had limped away and regained the felucca, and only the dead or dying were left. I could not see how many more of the enemy were despatched, for about this time the Spaniards had begun their work of destruction, by cutting away the rigging: one man cut the main-topsail halyards, and the yard coming down, left the sail bagging over the top-brim, so as entirely to obstruct the view I had formerly got of the forecastle, between the foot-rope and the main-stay. Our attention could now only be directed to the quarter-deck, through lubber's hole; for we did not dare risk the chance of looking over the top.

One or two more energetic than the

rest of the Spaniards soon launched three of the dead men through an open port on the larboard-side: others had descended into the cabin, and returned on deck with some spirits and wine; they seemed very indifferent about their prize, most probably from having found her quite empty as to a cargo. My attention was suddenly awakened by a shriek from a female — we had three left on board: it was a charm to the ear of the Spaniards; they rushed to the companion, from which aperture the cry issued, and shortly we saw the poor victim of the Captain's brutality brought upon deck by two men, each of whom endeavoured to claim her as his prize: words ran high, the affrighted girl screamed for mercy. — Mercy from Spanish pirates! Alas! that cry was unheeded. That one woman was on board was evident, and therefore more might be: the main-hatch was taken off, and fearlessly some of the pirates descended. They soon found the other two slaves; who, after experiencing the horrid brutality of their

masters, were conveyed on board the felucca. Again the Spaniards seated themselves by the combings of the hatchway, and revived all their horrible murderous intentions by continued draughts of spirits. The sun was fast sinking, and night approaching; savage intoxication soon warned them of their remaining duty before they retired to rest; and now began the dreadful close of that day of murder.

I saw only one remaining Spaniard, who was dead, left on the deck; and I beheld one of our men—it was the cooper—goaded on at the point of the pirates' daggers to where the corpse was lying: they lifted the dead to an erect position, and enfolding the neck of our man in the still supple arms of the Spaniard, lashed the hands of the dead man together; with horrible, half-drunken, and frantic joy, they then tied the hands of the cooper round the back of the Spaniard, and goading the living victim with their swords, shouted a maddening yell: then laughing and sing-

ing as they turned them round, they conveyed the unresisting cooper to the gangway, and calling out, "Adios, amigo mio," pushed him towards the side:—his foot caught against a coil of rope, which in the scuffle had been kicked to that situation, the balance was lost, and the living and the dead went head foremost into the ocean. Not a cloud darkened the sun when such ruffian murder was committed; no thunder roared to manifest God's awful displeasure at this infernal deed; but a shout of joy followed the consummation of the act, and a hellish laugh was the burial service of the dead.

I looked up at Waters: his blanched face, his pale lips, his trembling figure, indicated his worst apprehensions; he did not dare articulate one word, but kept his trembling finger on his mouth, to warn me of my danger, and the necessity of silence. It was now a dead calm; the sun went down in all its glory, as if it smiled upon the deed; there was scarcely a cloud to darken the heavens,

and already in the east the stars had begun to shine: above us, all was still and hushed, all nature seemed to smile; below, the drunken riot of the murderous pirates broke the silence of the evening, and the ineffectual struggle of some of our men, as they resisted the endeavours of the Spaniards to force them on deck, was the prelude to other deeds of murder.

Two more victims were brought up, and lashed together; these were tied back to back: one seemed anxious to close his career and jump overboard; the other, still clinging to the remnant of his miserable existence, or fearful from his numerous crimes to meet his fate, strenuously opposed the efforts of his comrade. The Spaniards laughed at the struggle; and as either party came near, they wounded them with their swords, and goaded them towards the gangway; at last, he that was most resolute gave a sudden plunge, and both were in the water. Then it was that the diabolical feelings of the pirates were most excited: both endeavoured to swim, and for a few seconds they suc-

ceeded; but as they neared the ship, the rope which an apparently friendly hand had offered to their succour was withdrawn, or only the wet end allowed to touch their hands, when it was jerked from their hold, and they were again left to the grave,—into which they ultimately descended, after a more than human exertion to cling to the faithless succour.

The next that was brought on deck was Captain Smith. His son leaped up immediately, and clung to him with all the strong hold of affection. The captain knew his end was come, and looked at the captain of the felucca, who had nearly fallen under his arm, and who was now very unconcernedly smoking a cigar, appealing for pity in regard to his son; for himself, he seemed quite prepared to meet his fate, and approached the gangway with a fearless unconcern. The youth riveted his arms round his father's neck, and cried out with all the excited feelings of a boy who could not reconcile himself to his inevitable death. "Oh, save me! save me, father!" cried the poor half-distracted creature; "save me

from these men ! what are these ruffians going to do with us?" At this moment some of the pirates tore young Smith from his father, and walked him to the captain of the felucca, who, running his quick eye over the pale face of the youngster, shook his head, puffed out a long line of smoke, and on his giving a glance at one of his men, the youngster was released, and again ran into his father's arms. Smith made no resistance as the pirates lashed his son to him ; the affrighted boy screamed most dreadfully, imploring his father to save him for his mother's sake; he endeavoured to kneel down, and held his hands, which were left free, in the manner of supplication. The father never shed a tear, but looked undaunted and undismayed ; and yet he seemed to linger on the deck, like one who would willingly have lived, if only for his son's sake. The lashing being completed, the pirates, who were anxious to finish their work of destruction, said "Via usted con dios," and gave the victims a push towards that ill-fated gangway.

"Oh, father! father! stop, stop, stop,—only for one minute,—father, only for one minute. Oh, look at me! I will not be drowned; oh, my poor mother! oh, save me! save me!" This seemed to disconcert the captain, for he stopped and seemed actually insensible to the pain he must have experienced from the application of a sword: he looked down upon his son's face, and I thought I saw, indistinctly as I could see, a tear fall. His son looked imploringly on the countenance of his father; his eyes seemed to read a hope of escape even when it was most useless and most unpromising. Ah! how long we cling to hope, even when its rainbow has lost its brightest colours; how fondly we cling to the last tint, although the eye may see it gradually fading from the view! and fervently even at death's gaping door we imagine an escape, and hope glimmers even in the darkest of adversity.

The captain having bent his head forward, and kissed the forehead of his son, who was screaming with the worst anticipation, lifted him from the deck, and walking steadily to the

gangway, jumped into the water, and sank to rise no more; but, as he fell, we heard one loud scream which the sea of eternity hushed for ever.

The rest of the crew were disposed of in the same manner, the Spaniards enjoying the scene of destruction, and occasionally making some unfeeling remarks as the poor sufferer seemed afraid to meet his untimely end; the last fared the worst, for the pirates were now in a state of intoxication, and gave way to all the most diabolical barbarities which the human mind, brutalized by the almost total abandonment of reason, could suggest.

The scene had now closed: those who were the most careful and sober had visited every part of the ship below, and reported to their captain that no living witness remained to blab the horrible tale, they returned to the felucca, having demolished all they could demolish, having plundered all they could plunder, and having destroyed all they could destroy. There were only four, the last lingerers on the stage of murder, when it occurred to them to exa-

mine the tops, and we felt the unwelcome foot-step on the rigging as a Spaniard planted his step upon the main-ratlines: he had ascended nearly half-mast high, when he stopped, in consequence of the pirate captain hailing him. Oh! the pain — the hope — the dread of that moment, I would not have return to me now for all the gold of Peru: the murders I had witnessed; the sure, the certain, inevitable fate which would follow our discovery; the shiver of death before the reality,—oh! no pen can relate, no tongue could tell, however gifted with the stream of eloquence, or softened by the tenderest heart, the feelings I at that moment experienced; and I doubt if at that moment I did not feel more than had my death followed. It is said that the worst apprehension of death is felt at the moment the awful *Guilty* is returned; the human mind thus suddenly stricken when the last gleam of hope is destroyed, is beaten down to its lowest point of degradation, and the moments, few indeed, between the sentence and the execution, are sufficient for a vigorous reaction; then the common courage

of the animal returns, and few there are who do not spur on their fortitude to the bold daring of death, even in its worst, its most degrading, most dreaded shape.

The summons of the captain had been attended to, and we saw our demon retreating slowly down the rigging. The man who went forward had arrived in the fore-top and called out that no one was aloft, a minute previous to the hail of the captain to the man in the main-rigging; the main-topsail entirely skreened us from the observation of the Spaniard forward; he descended rapidly, he ran along the deck, and jumping over the quarter was on board the felucca. A light breeze had sprung up when the sun set, the lashings were cast adrift, and in a few minutes the pirate was under all sail standing away from the hull of the Rapid, to which we afterwards discovered they had set fire below, but by the goodness of Providence the fire was extinguished, and no serious injury was done to the hull.

When the felucca was about half-pistol shot, they hove to, and commenced firing at the

hull, with an intention, no doubt, of sinking her. Of this amusement they very shortly grew tired, and, after one or two rather random shots, they trimmed their sails, hauled close upon a wind, and were in a short time at a respectable distance, and hardly discernible. So completely had fear worked upon us, that we never exchanged a word until now, and we began in a whisper, but as we gained confidence, we talked in our common pitch of voice, and agreed upon one point, which was, that we had better remain where we were until the felucca should be entirely out of sight.

I have no doubt we should have acted up to our cautious resolution, had not the smell of smoke aroused us to our peril in another shape. The fire kindled below had never burnt fiercely, and the smoke must have ascended before the mainmast. We were now convinced of our danger, and descended rapidly: I felt an indescribable horror as I jumped on the deck, but the necessity of active exertion to render our forlorn bark a haven of security, prompted us to lose no time in extinguishing the flames. The

fire had been lighted by a drunken man, or we must have been sacrificed; some small pieces of wood were placed *near it*, and some rope, which had been cut in junks and untwisted, lay also clear of the flames: the fire had been kindled at the foot of the fore hatchway, and had partly consumed the ladder. We found a bucket, and the water was not far distant; in ten minutes the flame was entirely extinguished, and we were safe from every danger.

Waters was an active sailor: he began to repair the damages forward, and I stood by him, for I was afraid to leave his side, notwithstanding we had searched every hole and corner of the vessel, and we were both quite certain that no other living creature but ourselves were on board: still I shuddered to approach the larboard gangway over which every one of the crew had been forced; and I shuddered to be left to my own thoughts, for they were of too melancholy a nature to brood over. About nine o'clock at night Waters had managed to splice the ropes which the Spaniards had destroyed, and we ventured with some exertion

to brace the head-yards forward, intending to steer back to the slaves in order to regain our two men whom we had left on shore. But as to carrying sail, that was rather a dangerous expedient, for the pirates had cut the lanyards of the lower rigging, and all our efforts to render the masts secure was ineffectual: however, as the wind was light, we braced the yards to the position required, and then we both came aft to the wheel.

The night was beautifully fine, and before we had ventured to alter the position of the yards, we had well ascertained that the felucca was out of sight, and fortunately our course lay exactly the reverse of that which she had shaped. It blew but a gentle breeze, and, although going well free, we scarcely could hear the water break under the cutwater: we looked at each other with a doubtful misgiving eye; we were alone on the face of the ocean, and uncertain if the provisions had not been destroyed, the water started, and starvation at hand. Never, perhaps, does life supply such reflection as at a moment like that in ques-

tion: our whole crew murdered; the vessel, which before was all animation and bustle, suddenly a sepulchre as to silence; no cheering sound connected with the duty of the ship to turn our thoughts into a more cheerful channel: the scene of the slaughter we now rested upon, and every mark on the deck, reminded us too strongly of the desperate struggle. On the very spot where I sat, the captain had nearly turned the tide of victory when the pirate was on the point of being dispatched; and when I remembered his courageous bearing at his last moment—his kindness to me since I had saved his life, I forgot all his treachery to entrap me, and all his false and broken promises when we passed the Saturn.

We must have remained nearly an hour lost in our own meditations, for neither of us spoke, when Waters, after looking at me attentively, said, "Well, Ganjam, you are young to have shared so many dangers and difficulties, and far better would it have been for both of us, perhaps, if this day had been our last; for who knows but that we are only reserved

for, if possible, a worse fate! It's very still here just now, is it not, my boy?"

Still as death, who has been too busy this day, I thought; for I did not answer.

"Well, my lad," said Waters, "we must not droop under our misfortunes; whilst we live we have always hope of better days, and, come what may, we can but die at last; and so all the dark frowns of mischance may yet give place to brighter scenes, and a happy return to our parents and friends."

I caught at the sound: "And have you," I replied, "a mother who lives and who is uncertain of your fate? have you a sister who loves and regards you? and have you a nurse who watched over your younger days, and who with the eye of devotedness comforted you in all hours of youthful miseries?"

"Yes," said Waters, "I have a mother, and I have a wife. Better had it been ten thousand times that the first had never bore me, or the latter never accepted me; from my birth to this day I never remember to have experienced one day's unalloyed happiness; on me

the real sun of life has never shone, and perhaps at this moment I might command more pleasure than I ever have known, for here, at least, none can command me, and it is my servitude which has made me more cursed than even Misfortune with all her frowns. But you, youngster, have all to hope, you cannot be worse off than at present, and therefore you must cheer up and lend me a willing hand until some assistance shall fall in our way. If the breeze stands, and we hit the right part of the coast, we can manage the brig enough to get her somewhere or another; and if we do miss the island, we can always run on shore, and then we shall not perhaps much better our situation, but I doubt if we should make it much worse."

"What's that?" said I, pointing to the larboard gangway, and clinging close to Waters: "What's that?"

"Eh!" replied Waters, "where?"

"There, there!" said I, trembling like a leaf, "moving backwards and forwards and looking so dark—there, there again!"

"Why, you foolish boy, how you frightened me! it's only the clew of the mainsail which is shaking right in the way of the moon: I should have known it at first, had it not been upon that gangway, and I don't like much to look at it. It was a desperate leap the captain took; and how his boy clung to him and prayed him to remain a little longer! he did not die like his father."

"He was too great a tyrant," I replied, "to be a brave man. Never did that little monster allow any opportunity of vexatious tyranny to escape him; even the poor little black wretch whom he had hooped up in the cask, led ten thousand times a worse life from the moment she became subject to the capriciousness of young Smith. But he has met the fate he had destined her to meet, and he felt more at his last moment than even his ingenuity as a tyrant could inflict on his victim."

"Did you see the mate," said Waters, "strike the Spaniard, when he attempted to lash him?"

"No," I replied; "after the captain's death

my eyes swam so that I saw nothing distinctly. I don't remember even when the mate was thrown overboard."

"Thrown overboard!" said Waters, "he jumped overboard before they could lash him to some one else, and although he could swim like a fish, he sank like a stone. He was more of the devil than man, and he may thank the captain that he lived as long as he did, for we had some idea of saving him and the slaves the trouble of drinking the water before we went to the island."

"Indeed!" I replied, "and how did you intend to do this?"

"Never mind asking, youngster; the day is passed, and he is at rest without my assistance. Now I am thinking, that whilst I steer you had better go down in the fore-hold and see if we have any water or provisions on board; and afterwards you can rummage the cabin-lockers, and see what those gentlemen Spaniards have left us to live upon for a day or two—Come, sheer along."

"No, no, Waters," said I, "down in that

hold I will not go by myself; if I go, you must go, or you must wait until daylight, then I shall not care to venture."

"Did you never hear the mate say that 'dead men tell no tales?'" said Waters.

"Yes, I did," I replied; "and once I heard you say so."

"When?" asked Waters, with a fierce expression of countenance—"When did you ever hear me make use of those very words?"

I remained silent from fear; for all the devil with which human nature is sometimes invested, seemed to rise from his heart and rest upon his features. I knew that for my life Waters did not care one straw; and if he thought he could have managed the brig himself, and that his guilty conscience did not require a companion to scare away recollection, he would have impressed those fearful words more strongly on me, and would, had an opportunity offered, have disposed of the brig, and had no living witness to rise up against him. But solitude is no friend to guilt; then does conscience hold a sovereign sway, and the mind,

unoccupied by external objects, or hardly roused into action from the want of that greatest requisite and comfort, one to receive and to respond, only looks upon the large mirror of the past, and sees in the reflection all the dark dangers and damnable deeds with which the retrospect is cursed. There may conscience see slight acts which, had they been generously done, might have saved a friend from ruin ; then some lurking intrigue, which, during the inflammation of the desire, had been regarded as trivial in offence, and had been followed with all the ardour of unbridled passion, without regard to the days of misery it entailed,—may peep through the background of the scene. Days and nights wasted in idleness and debauchery ; the one almost gone before known to exist, the other usurping the place of the former, the minutes which should have been devoted to refreshing wearied nature, having been spent in drunken revelry, indecent and unhallowed carousing, filthy songs, and the greater degradation of the mind, by a forced aberration of intellect ! In that large mirror of

the mind how few generous, truly laudable acts appear! for see the end of each man's opinion of life—it is comprised in one word, "Comfort:" that seems "the consummation so devoutly to be wished;" and, when it is attained, what is existence? To rise when laziness is fatigued of sleep, to eat, to shorten life by running heedlessly through it, to eat again, to loll on a silken sofa or easy chair, and then, when weary of the nothing we have done, once more to sleep, until the revolution of time and its flight has fatigued laziness again; and so on, until the last syllable of recorded time;—and then our friends to take care we are velveted and bedizened in death, a lying epitaph, the undertaker paid, and—farewell man! Let any being sum up his existence, and see how much the picture is overdrawn; then only ask himself how much out of the three score and ten years has been devoted to useful and laudable labour; and out of the millions of people who have drawn the fountain of life, how many names are there left to save humanity from the sweeping clause of universal

idleness and uselessness! I am sick of the reflection, for I acknowledge its truth and its importance.

I looked at Waters as if I would have read his very heart: if I had told him when I had heard him express those words, he would have known that I had heard him pronounce my own doom; and, consequently, would have felt that I clung to him, not from friendship, cemented by the blood of others, but from the fear of the calamity he had sentenced me to. I felt terror-stricken, and did not answer.

He was standing at the wheel on the starboard side, his left arm leaning over the upper spoke; I was seated on the deck close by his feet: he waited with some impatience, until finding I remained silent, he gave me a smart kick, and said, "Do you intend to answer me, you young hound? if you don't, I'll pitch you over that gangway, be assured."

Finding it was useless to evade the question, I boldly told him when I had heard him so express himself, and I confessed that I instantly told the captain, because, in the destruction he

had meditated, I was included. I urged him to remember that, by my having so interfered, his conscience was relieved of a load which would have remained an unwilling and unbidden guest when he least required or wished it.

"Conscience!" said he; "that's a rum thing that conscience, after all; for," he continued, "my conscience told me that I should make a bad fight of it with the pirate, so I stowed myself away to avoid proving it true. Well," said he, "there is no harm done as it turns out: but you had a narrow squeak for your life that night."

We remained on deck the whole night; the vessel going very steadily through the water, and, the breeze continuing without either failing or freshening, we lashed the wheel and both fell asleep.

In the morning we were holding the same course, and when daylight was fairly established, we both went below to examine into the quantity of our provisions. We found that we had enough for a year at least, and that the water was sufficient for our sustenance for two

or three months; therefore, as we had no fear of present starvation, we kept our spirits up with the reflection that, although we were alone, we had a ship to ourselves, no master to order, and no slave to obey. When two people, and only two, are together in the world, they soon drop all distinction, and Friday with Robinson Crusoe soon rose from slave to equal.

We were unfortunate enough to fall in with another tornado, which split our sails to rags, leaving us only the fore and main courses, which, before the breeze came on, we had contrived to secure. We were blown again off the land, and taking at the conclusion of the gale the easterly trade-wind, we steered across the Atlantic to the West Indies. This was the most fatiguing part of the whole of my life, because we were obliged to steer the vessel, if we intended making any land at all; and I found that, when my watch was out, Waters was by no means very active in relieving me, but, on the contrary, long before his was expired he would turn me out. We had nothing set but the fore-sail and a fore-topmast stay-sail, so that we

could not well broach to, and, if we did, it would not have signified much, as the breeze in the trades is always pretty steady, and the sea does not run at that frightful height to cause any serious damage.

Waters understood navigation very fairly, but the Spaniards had not left us quadrant or sextant; we therefore shaped our course by the breeze, keeping always directly before it, and being well assured that it did not change materially by the rising and setting of the sun. For days and days we continued the same monotonous life, not once seeing a vessel; at last, Waters said that we must be near the American coast, for that we had been more than thirty days slipping at a good pace through the sea, and that at night we must be more vigilant, for on what part of the coast we should fall was a matter of great uncertainty: as for latitude or longitude, we were in happy ignorance of either. We contrived to bend our cable, and get ready those little things which are required when ships anchor in a hurry; an axe, the only one left on board, was placed forwards

and lashed close to the stoppers, so that in one moment we could cut the anchor adrift : these preparations made, we felt more at rest, for men never sleep so well as when they fancy they are secured by previous prudence from any untoward occurrence.

"I have been thinking, Ganjam," said Waters, "that if we could hit any part of the coast which is not much frequented, we might yet get this craft to some port, where we could sell her ; and I see no reason why we should not pocket the money and start for ourselves; for Widow Smith will never hear any more of her, and she will be kind enough to think we are drowned with the rest. At any rate, we may as well get ready if a chance should occur, and therefore we will begin and paint some other name on her stern : I dare say you can handle the paint-brush well enough for that ; so you may begin as quickly as you like."

It suddenly occurred to me that Waters, who was swinging a grating over the stern, intended when I was on it to cut me adrift.

Why the thought came across me I know not, for latterly we had been like brothers—misfortune being a great friend-maker. In vain I argued upon the improbability of such an occurrence, knowing that land was not in sight, and that by himself he could not manage to steer the ship night and day; still the warning voice we sometimes hear, and seldom heed, distinctly told me not to get upon that grating. Well, thought I to myself, if he does intend to drown me, he can do that at any time, for I am nothing in his arms; and when a man has made up his mind to commit a murder, it matters little if it is done by a knife cutting a rope and drowning you, or cutting a throat and finishing you. But that reflection arose from ignorance of the human mind; no man likes the performance of a deed of blood; when the victim can be distinctly seen, the eye of the innocent pierces the heart's core of a murderer: it is in darkness that the deed of death is done; for then the human glance is deprived of its power, and the cowardly hand of the

assassin strikes undismayed. We were familiar enough with the dead, and had seen enough of murder to hate the name. My cunning suggested an excuse. "I see," said I, "exactly what you mean; but it would be a bad plan to rub the name out *now;* for if we should fall in with any English man-of-war, our having done so, (for they will be sure to find it out) would be a strong presumptive proof that we had somehow got rid of the crew ourselves, and the story of the pirate would be discredited. I think if we were to wait until we made the land, then, if no vessel was in sight, and we could get into some creek, the thing could be easily done, and no suspicion would arise."

Waters eyed me like a man who pierces the heart of another to see if he is suspected. I did not waver in the least: I had so framed my mind, from the knowledge that I was in a den with a tame tiger and uncertain when he might pounce upon me, that I had schooled myself to coolness and deliberation; and I taught myself more in the six weeks I was

with him, than all the schoolmasters in England could have inculcated. I learned this, that self-possession was better than strength; that the wary man is more than a match for the strong; and that in this as in every thing else—knowledge is power.

"Why," said Waters, "there may be something in all that; but I don't think we are ever to see another craft: here have we been running right across the ocean, and never seen a stitch of canvass but our own; and d—n me," said he, "if I don't think the land has got under weigh too, and is sailing the same course as ourselves. Well, we'll leave the daubing till another time; but we must be quick and do it when we make the land. Jump," said he, "and keep a bit of a look-out for it a-head."

I did not mind this, for I knew he could not cut the foremast away; so I went up, and perched myself on the topmast cross-trees. No land was visible; the horizon was as clear as the daylight itself, around us the same uninterrupted boundary encircled us — not a

ship, nor a haze, nor a cloud for fancy to form into a hillock. It was now getting fast towards sunset, and Waters called me down, saying he would look out himself. I came to the wheel, and he went aloft: he remained there until it was quite dark, when he came and sat himself down by the wheel, having got some grog and a biscuit. He was very downcast, and imagined all manner of inconsistent things; first about our having gone too far to the southward; then, that we had been swept up to the northward; and at last he said, "D—n me, but I wish we could make the land, even if we run upon it and lost our lives; for this existence is hardly worth holding, if we are to hope and never see it realized."

CHAPTER X.

Then first one universal rent there rush'd,
Louder than the loud ocean—like a crash
Of echoing thunder, and then all was hush'd—
Save the wild wind and the remorseless dash
Of billows.—— BYRON.

IT was a cloudless night; one of those beautiful hours when the stars seem, from their brightness, to have come closer to the earth: the breeze had rather freshened, and we were going at the rate of six knots an hour. It was about midnight, and Waters had just roused up to relieve me: he seemed sad; and when he took the helm, said, "Good night, boy, and may you sleep better than I have done; for the captain came to me, and stood by my hammock, and I shake so

that I must not be left alone: so lie down here on the deck, and I 'll cover you up." He was certainly much agitated; and as he communicated his fears to me, he need not have asked me to lie down near him; I would rather have jumped overboard than have gone below.

I was dozing when I heard him say, " Lord, Lord, if it should be so, my time is not far off." I looked—Waters had his eyes fixed upon the clear moon, and the wan and haggard air of his countenance frightened me into activity; I jumped up and said, " What do you see, Waters?"—" Nothing, nothing, boy," he resumed, " but we shall soon know the worst."

Restless from his changed manner, and with the idea of the grating still upon my mind, I arose and stood by his side. " I think," I said, "the wind has freshened very much, and the sea seems to be breaking more than it did; I don't know what it is, but I feel very oddly, and as if something was going to happen; and, look," said I, " how black the horizon is astern."

" Well," said Waters, " if it blows hard enough to blow the devil's horns off his head,

we have little to fear with the sail we have set; but it does look dark and squally, and it makes me think we are getting near the land, for the whole feeling of the weather seems to have changed. If you don't feel inclined to sleep, you may as well keep your eye fixed on the horizon there, for the sea seems to come sweeping past us with that hollow noise that I don't like, although I see nothing to fear."

The cloud gradually extended itself over the whole of the eastern part of the horizon; the breeze freshened in small gusts, and about one o'clock a heavy squall came on, bringing with it one of those tropical showers through which it is quite impossible to see ten yards; the sea roared alongside; the two fore-sheets seemed stretched to their utmost, and the foresail bellied forward against the fore-stay; we seemed to fly through the water; the white foam sparkled as we passed it, and we might be fairly said to be scudding in a gale. Waters steered her steadily right before the wind. The clouds had now covered the moon, and we

could see and hear nothing but the break of the sea, and the roar of the wind.

"It is a dark business this," said he, "and I should like to round her to, for we must near the land, and may be soon on it; and yet we should have seen it at sunset if we had been so close as I think we are."

"How shall we get the foresail off her?" I replied; "we never could get it secured in such a breeze as this, and if we split it, we shall be badly off."

"We must make the best of it we can," said he; "just look over the starboard gangway and see if you can discover anything."

I jumped upon the netting, but could distinguish nothing but a line of surf, apparently the breakers of the sea from the violence of the wind. He told me to steer for a moment, whilst he looked; no sooner did he fix his eagle glance in the direction we were steering, than he called out, "Lord, Lord, save us! hard a starboard the helm! bring her to! bring her to!" As he said this, he jumped from the net-

ting, and putting the helm down, the vessel broached to; the sea, as she flew up to the wind, came clean over her broadside, the foresail flapped with the noise of thunder, and ultimately was blown out of the bolt-rope, whilst the foretopmast staysail was split from top to bottom. Each sea, from the want of sail to steady the ship, came right on board of us, and the vessel rolled about in the trough, of course, perfectly unmanageable. To windward all was darkness and murkiness, and close on the lee-beam we thought we saw the breakers as they rolled over a reef of rocks; the sea was white with foam, and the wind seemed to increase rather than to lull. We both looked like the forlorn and frightened wretches we were. Now the appalling scene appeared the worst we had faced, for present dangers always seem the greatest: we said not a word: Waters' long hair was blowing behind him as he kept his eye to windward; and I, unable to face the storm, kept looking at the white surf to leeward. We might have been about an hour in this situation, when the wind suddenly lulled, and we

heard distinctly the roar of the sea as it broke upon the shore—that deep-toned sound which only frightened sailors know, which long and long reverberates as it rolls. How long we were to live was most uncertain; we could do nothing to save ourselves: we could make no sail; we could launch no boat; we were unable to form a raft; every minute made the danger the more evident; the rough dash of the ocean as it burst upon the rocks was more distinctly heard, and the long low hollow murmur as the returning wave ebbed back into the sea, was too evident to admit of hope. Why lengthen description? The Rapid, rolling and reeling under the control of the elements, struck by every sea, was fast drawing towards the rocks under her lee; each sea grew higher as it approached the reef; and about half-past two, being lifted by one tremendous roll, she was forced upon the rocks and wrecked.

In that dreadful moment when life seems drawn to its finest thread—in that momentwhen all our fears are realized, when we seem to rush into the death we would so cling to avoid, how

breaks the despair of man in the useless cry for mercy! One shriek from Waters as she struck might have been heard above the loud elements, and my despairing cry echoed back my apprehensions. The first shock tore away the rudder, which, groaning at the severity of the force, took with it pentles, gudgeons, and woodlock, bursting through the upper deck, and starting even the stern-post; the sea toppled right into the wrecked Rapid; the mainmast yielding, fell over the starboard side, and the fore-topmast snapping close above the cap, fell over to leeward.

The ship would have split in a quarter of an hour had she remained stationary; but, fortunately, the following sea lifted her further on the reef, so that the first tremendous fall of the water was arrested by the outer ledge, and rendered our situation a shade less perilous; still it was evident that she would shortly go to pieces. There swung the fore-yard without a brace to steady it; the broken topmast, with the topsail-yard, was hanging over to leeward, whilst the ropes, which were unbelayed, or carried

away, were blowing like pendants in the wind: the ship was heeled over on her starboard side, the water boiling over her larboard gunwales, whilst the only two human beings who witnessed this scene of destruction, clung with the faint hope of existence, and cowered under the weather-bulwark. We were close together, but never spoke, excepting to animate each other as we heard the sea roaring to devour us. "Hold on! hold on!" was all we said: we were too frightened to pray; and all our hope seemed in our strong grasp of the cavil to which we clung. She struck with fearful violence, and we felt the grating of the keel when she endeavoured to settle herself as the water receded; the whole frame shook like a leaf, and the foremast bending its stay into a bight as she plunged, snapped its support as it regained its upright position, and was carried away above the board. The sea, however, lifted us again further on; again came the devouring element, and breaking upon the quarter, carried away the bulwark level with the deck; the main boom swept over to leeward, and we had not a stick left.

"Come forward, Ganjam," said Waters; "bear a hand, or the next sea will have you!" We both left our position and got forward to the foremast, to the stump of which we both lashed ourselves: the yielding vessel soon began to give way; the water by this time must have washed above her lower deck; she trembled and groaned as she grated on the rocks, and about four o'clock she split; the after part breaking into pieces, and being borne onwards, whilst the forecastle and that part about the chest-trees remained firm.

It is almost madness to recall to my mind the dreadful feelings which came over me when I saw all hope destroyed by the breaking up of the vessel. No boat remained to afford us the slightest prospect of escape; no land was visible to inspire us with confidence, or proffer us succour; the boiling surf whizzed over the shattered bark, and prayers seemed useless and unavailing. Those are no moments to reflect, when death is so near, and is so awful in its approach. I have seen the guilty man led to the scaffold and coolly converse with his friend; I

have stood by when the medical attendant has hinted the propriety of arranging all worldly concerns; I have held the fevered maniac in my arms as Death claimed him; and I have heard the last indistinct voice of the suicide; but never, oh, heavens! never did I fancy the mind of man could be so prostrated as I know my own to have been on that awful night; never could I have credited that the winds and the waves, whose howlings then resembled my funeral dirge, could have excited more emotion of fear, than when the hand of the enemy shook the cutlass over my head, and my death seemed inevitable. But no; it is in the hurry and confusion of the fight that the mind enjoys its greatest activity; it is when death is certain, that we string our nerves to meet it like men; it is when a deed is done, that we can reconcile it to ourselves; but when there is a glimpse of hope, however distant, or obscurely darted—when life *may* be preserved, although our own puny efforts are useless for such a preservation—when we rely upon others, and it is doubtful if those others heed us,—then, then it

is, that he who would have stood undismayed on the scaffold, or he who could calmly listen to the denouncement of certain death to his enfeebled frame, or the man who, in the hot and riotous blood of a battle, could wash his hands in the gore of his fellow-creature—then do they become cowards; then does that timid thing, a female mind, become superior to our own; and she, who would have fainted at the sight of a spider, or shrunk from a beetle, surrenders herself up to her God with a calmness and a nobleness worthy the example of those who call themselves the Lords of the Creation.

The day dawned; the wind, as is usual in tropical climates, died away, as if in awe of the sun; the sea went down a little, and we turned our eyes to examine what prospect we had of assistance. Right ahead, as we lay on the rocks, was the land: it seemed a low island, though here and there it grew higher and more distinct; it was about four miles from the reef, and was certainly inhabited. How to draw the attention of the humane to our situation became now a point of some importance, although

we might have known that many there are, who, after a gale, look out upon the reefs, not so much with the hope of rendering assistance, as of turning the property of the distressed to increasing their wealth.

The only spar we could lay hold of, was the handspike of one of the guns forward, which had become jammed in the carriage; but we were neither of us over anxious to cast off our lashing, for the sea swept clean over us, and, had we not used that precaution, we must have been carried off the wreck and drowned. Waters, however, taking the opportunity, and keeping the end of the rope in his hand, secured the valuable object. To this we tied our neck-handkerchiefs, and lifting the signal above the stump of the foremast, which was about six feet above-board, we succeeded in lashing it firmly, thus affording a proof that the wreck was not untenanted. But the sea broke with such violence on the shore, that we hardly thought human cupidity, which is much stronger than generous exertion, could induce any one to launch his boat and risk his life

against such fearful odds. As the sea went down, we became pretty secure; the part of the ship we were on no longer rose and bumped; it remained a fixture, over which the spray flew; but the outside of the reef seemed so exposed, that we could entertain very slender hopes of assistance, at least for some time to come. The day was now fairly established; the sun was just peeping above the horizon, and we saw, through the spray which foamed over the reef, a boat coming off. No pen can convey the pleasurable sensations which arose, or the eager manner in which we watched the struggles of those who thus braved death to offer assistance. Waters was nearly frantic with joy, and, in spite of the rolling surf, he swore that, if the boat could not succeed in getting alongside, he would jump overboard and swim to her. In vain I opposed his rash determination; the water boiled around us, and no man could have maintained himself above it for five minutes. As we had both foreseen, when the boat neared the edge of the rocks, the wary seamen saw their inevitable destruction in endeavouring

to cross the line of breakers, which broke with tremendous force on the reef, and being again disgorged from a thousand rents, caused circle within circle as the sea regained its freedom. Twice had the boat's crew endeavoured to near, and twice had they turned to the shore as if in despair: then did we implore in words which never reached their destination; then did we call aloud for pity: they were not two hundred yards from us; we stretched out our hands, we prayed, we cried, we supplicated that they would not desert us. They turned again, and again neared the rocks, when Waters, casting himself adrift, and making a signal of his determination, rushed headlong over the side, and in a moment was struggling against the tremendous sea which opposed him. At first he rose superior to the element, but, when it receded he was left on his side on the sharp projecting points of the rocks; and no sooner did he endeavour to stand upright, in order to gain a little distance by a spring towards the boat, than he was swept away, turning round and round in the eddy, until that subsided,

and he was again visible. I thought not on my own situation; my whole mind and soul were fixed upon the man who had twice meditated my destruction. I felt every struggle he made, and would have cheerfully faced the dangers by which he was surrounded, had I thought I could have rendered him any assistance. I saw him tossed from rock to rock; I saw how feebly a human creature could contend against the fierce force of the unrestrained ocean. I saw him dashed against the rocks, and I almost imagined I saw the blood oozing from his side; at last, when his efforts seemed gradually declining, and when strength and courage were failing, he was carried clear of the ledge, and, after whirling into deep water, was rescued by the boat's crew. I saw him hauled into the boat, and I saw through my streaming eyes that boat turn towards the shore, and after watching its diminishing form, I thought of my own forlorn and miserable state, and gave vent to a flood of tears. There was I, the last lonely victim out of the Rapid's crew, lashed to the stump of the foremast, each

sea washing over me, the wind howling in my ears, and the wreck gradually yielding to the repeated shocks: she was breaking up plank by plank; the fragments were everywhere visible, and those only hopes of my salvation were soon hurled far away to leeward. To the excitement of hope I had been indebted for the courage I had maintained; but when my eyes could no longer see the boat, and when I felt the horrid loneliness, and imagined my approaching death, all that excitement soon relaxed, and I became, from indifference to that which I thought unavoidable, nothing but a living mass, without energy and without hope. At last, all seemed to swim around me; I remember endeavouring ineffectually to steadily fix my gaze upon a floating plank, but my brain seemed to whirl with the eddies: I then can faintly recollect a kind of vision of green fields, with now and then a glimpse of sunshine enlivening the scene; then came a general stupor, and I slept. How long it lasted I know not; but when I again opened my eyes I was in a hut, surrounded by black women, who

were busily rubbing me into life ; and, oh ! the pain of resuscitation—ten thousand times is it worse than all the agonies of suffocation ; for in that moment, when the sea of eternity seems overwhelming its victim, after the first painful struggle is over, a kind of pleasing sensation steals over the drowning man, and he relinquishes life in a dream of delightful fields or variegated groves: such has ever been the description of those who, to all intents and purposes, have been drowned : the gurgling of the water, the rush into the ears, the useless pant for breath, is only momentary ; the rest is a pleasure, which ends in sleep, and thus the spark is quenched.

My first inquiries were for Waters. He was alive and in bed in the next room ; every care had been bestowed upon him ; all that science could suggest had been tried, but the fracture he had experienced from the several severe bruises on the rocks, had left him in a very precarious state ; he had been delirious, and in his ravings spoke of murders, and of slaves, of pirates, of battles, but with such incoherency

that those who saved him from death had as yet been unable to trace his history; to me, therefore, they turned their utmost attention, and when I with feeble voice told my misfortunes, and retraced my life, it was imagined that I was wandering, and rest and quiet were prescribed.

In a few days I was perfectly restored. I had been kept apart from Waters, for suspicion was strongly against us; but when I narrated the facts, my story was so clear, so exactly what I had told before, so minute as to dates, that it was credited. Curiosity, that strong symptom of a vigorous intellect, soon brought the more wealthy of the islanders to my assistance, and I was regarded as the most unfortunate boy alive: it was resolved to remove me as soon as I should be quite recovered, and I at last found some friends who vied with each other in protecting the unfortunate and sheltering the distressed.

Waters was fast giving way, and it was evident that he could not last long. One morning he cried out, "Show him to me, show him to me,

and I shall die contented !" After many questions he answered in a kind of wild stare, " Why, Ganjam to be sure ; show him to me !" I was accordingly admitted into his room. He was in bed, his face haggard and worn, his eye bright but perfectly senseless, his lips almost livid and opened, whilst his rough beard and uncombed locks gave the idea of a savage scared at a human figure. He stared fearfully at me, and then seemed to retrace in his memory where he had previously seen the being who stood at that moment near him. I offered him my hand ; indeed, I endeavoured to take his, but he recoiled from me as if stung by an asp, and rolling himself up in the bedclothes seemed to dread the touch of one whose death he had once resolved upon. It is said that a corpse will bleed when the murderer approaches it ; it has been affirmed that the maniac knows the object of his hatred, and that whilst his heart is seared against the being he once loved, yet that such is the inherent malignity of human nature, that his nurtured revenge can call

reason back to the brain from which it had apparently been banished for ever.

" I tell you he is drowned," he said; " I saw him fall overboard when I cut the grating away ;—and now I am all alone, with the wind howling and the sea roaring,—but the ship is mine, and no one knows of it ! Come, come, Ganjam, the paint ! the paint ! quick, quick !"

I nearly fell senseless when I heard the words; they confirmed that warning voice to which I had fortunately listened, although throughout life that wonderful precursor of events is seldom heeded until the calamity has occurred, and we remember that we might have avoided the evil.

" No no," he continued; " I did not kill him, the pirates did it ! I saw him jump overboard with his son ! Hah ! hah ! hah ! how they twirled and twirled ! Hard a-starboard ! hard a-starboard ! we are on the rocks ! God save us, boy ! now for a swim !" and he began to use his legs and arms as if he were in the water and struggling against the waves. Sud-

denly he stopped and began wiping his hair, then he turned away with a shudder, and said, "He was dead before I threw him overboard! But what signifies a black man? I have seen them starving by thousands! Give me some water! some water! 'tis seven days since the calm began!—But we can get rid of the mate, *and dead men tell no tales!*"

I rushed from the room and threw myself on my bed; the last words had awakened a most bitter remembrance in relation to that accursed vessel, in which, from the time I had entered to the moment she had split, I had never known but one moment's satisfaction, and yet I almost fancied it pleasure to the scene now before me. He gradually grew worse and worse until the expiration of a week, when, after a lucid interval of some few minutes, during which time he confirmed all my statements, and evinced as ample repentance for the sins he had committed as the short space of returning reason allowed, and after having said that he hoped I might live to be more fortunate, he relapsed into his former aberration, and talking of murders and

slaves, endeavoured to climb up the wall, and having succeeded in getting upright, uttered a deep groan and fell back dead. The black women gave a sudden shriek, and she who had been moistening the poor man's lips with a sponge, dropped the wet substance and fell upon the floor. It was an awful sight; it left me without any former companion, a stranger on the island of Antigua: it left me without a friend; for although I had every reason to dread my companion when alive and alone with him in the Rapid, still I felt a void by that man's death, which misfortune alone could create: with him I had braved the battle, fire, and wreck! with him I had watched the cool murders of the pirates, and with him alone I had crossed the Atlantic. We buried him the next morning before sun-rise, but no prayers were offered for the repose of his soul, which, if human intercession is of any avail, were sadly wanted; no tear hallowed the ceremony, but silently was he placed to mingle with the dust whence he sprang, and to which he had returned. His life had been a life of ceaseless acti-

vity, and had his energies been directed towards more honourable pursuits, he would have died, perhaps, an ornament to society, from which he had long been an outcast. He was of that curious compound we so often meet—a man bold and fearless in the execution of crime, but, when fairly opposed, a creeping, cringing craven. In the dark a murderer; in the light a coward: where the glance of the human eye could not penetrate, he was desperately daring; when alone he, was fearful; and when opposed, and in the glare of day, a heartless timid wretch.

> "So glow-worms sparkle in the night,
> But dare not stand the test of day."

Every circumstance connected with the sailing and stranding of the Rapid was listened to with avidity; accounts were transmitted to England of her wreck, and poor widow Smith heard of the loss of her husband, son, and fortune, in one breath. In the mean time I was removed to the house of a planter who possessed large estates in the island; a letter was written to my father, and it was resolved that,

after I had received an answer, I should return to begin life again, as boys retreat before they jump. I had nothing to complain of in the way of unkindness; it was the first time in my life I had ever known personal freedom, and having neither captain to control, nor parent to enforce, I was as happy as a person can be who has not one farthing in the world, and who relies upon the bounties of others for his present sustenance.

Oh thou whom the world falsely calls Charity, thou art indeed a fickle divinity, and as blind as Justice ought to be!—how often do we see the swindler succeed, whilst the truly distressed starve! And how unlike art thou to that good "which covereth a multitude of sins!" how frequently does vanity urge thee on! how often does the unbounded praise of personal charms provoke thee to be generous! and then with what self-complacency dost thou persuade thyself that thou art the very personification of Charity herself, although in reality thou art only buying the applause of the wretched, or listening to the

false notes of a dissembler. It is charity indeed to do good by stealth and blush to find it fame, to take the houseless to a home, and to clothe the naked; but if the good work is trumpeted forth by him who performs it, then it ceases to be of the heavenly kind, and becomes worldly pride and feminine ostentation. If the whole world were ransacked, perhaps the really charitable would find a room eighteen feet by ten quite sufficient to hold them without embarrassing one another.

I should ill return the favours I received by classing my hospitable landlord with such opprobrium; but I cannot forget the frequent allusions he made, when he was complimented upon his generosity, and I was warned of my obligation—"that one feels obliged to do these little acts of kindness; that he never could bear to look unmoved at misfortune; and that religion was the ground-floor of his edifice." Hah! thought I, we gain experience as we rub through life. Captain Smith took me on board the Rapid merely as a favour—he made a slave of me, he made almost a murderer of

me;—and now I like not this colouring of the picture; I fear the groundwork may be slippery. The time crept on, and as I was more fairly domesticated, the polish of society restored me to my former position in life; and it was credited by some, who lent a charitable ear to my tale, that I was not the impostor they had believed me to be.

At last the branch packet from Barbadoes arrived, and brought the long-expected letters; one to my host, and the other to myself; both written by my father, and both sealed with black wax. They were written in a strain of paternal tenderness to which I had been a stranger; that to my friend and hospitable host was couched in terms of the greatest obligation, and finished by imploring him to do the last act of kindness, by forwarding me as soon as possible to England. My own letter was of a far more melancholy cast: after having expressed himself gratified at finding his son alive, who had been believed dead, he described the last moments of my poor mother. It appeared, that from the time of my loss she

gradually pined away, though she always clung to the hope that I was alive; and finding herself sinking under the infirmities of age and maternal grief, she recommended me in the strongest manner to my father. "Remember," she said, at nearly her last hour, "remember your son Robert; and if ever he is restored to your arms, treat him with the kindness he deserves; rely upon it he has suffered enough for all the follies of his youth." She died, it appears, as all good people do die, with a fervent hope of a happier hereafter; cheerful to the last, doing acts of kindness to her neighbours, beloved by all, and remembered by those who knew her. She was an excellent woman, a good wife, and an affectionate mother.

This was another unfortunate event, for, whilst she lived, I was sure of a mediator between my father and myself; but I greatly feared that, when he heard that I owed all my misfortunes to my own negligence, his commiseration might turn into contempt, and that I might again be subject to all the petty vexations which had so sickened me of home.

In the mean time a sufficient stock of clothes was purchased, and I was desired to be in readiness to embark when the packet was to return to England: "But," said my friend, "take my advice, never mention your misfortunes, or you will be voted a Jonas, and you will never know one moment's repose on board the ship; for sailors," said he, "are superstitious, and believe all common occurrences to proceed from some supernatural intervention. I have known," said my friend, "a cat thrown overboard for fear it should hatch sprites; and buckets of holy-water expended in sprinkling a ship's decks, because a ghost had been seen stalking about her: in short, the absurdities, follies, and fancies of seamen are without bounds; and, more especially will they now be on the alert for ill-luck, because you are to sail on Friday—a day ominous to all seamen."

In the interim of departure I was cordially greeted by the gentlemen of the island, and I thought I saw through the right end of the telescope of hope, a near approach to fortune, which the glass magnified; whereas, previously

to the wreck, I had looked through the wrong end, and saw all my prospects at an immeasurable distance. I was naturally cheerful, and, in spite of all the croakings of my friends as to the unfortunate youth, I felt a presentiment that I was yet destined to be '*somebody*.' The day arrived; the branch packet which was to convey me to Barbadoes already had her sails loose; every one hurried down to take leave of friends. Among the passengers there were some who were going to spend the results of sugar plantation in England; and with about ten other happy people, all men, some of whom had a sprinkling of grey hairs prematurely plentiful; others, who seemed not much to heed the 'kerchiefs decked in heavenly green,' with which the numerous Miss Lucys kept waving; and one brown man, who kept his eye with a vacant stare upon the place of his birth, where many a happy day had been passed even in slavery, until the liberality of the master, without the assistance of Mr. Stanley's bill, had rendered him miserable by making him free. He now no longer found a home pro-

vided for him, his small patch of ground to be his own profit; he no longer heard the simple music to which he had often skipped and danced when the toil of the day was over, and the evening of repose followed the morn of employment; but with a heavy vacancy he gazed upon that spot on which he had passed many a happy hour, and almost sighed to be restored to his cottage, his cocoa-grounds, and his merry companions. But he was proud of being free; and his freedom led him to another island, where his former slavery had been unknown.

The anchor was aweigh, the sails spread, the breeze fresh, the last adieu had reached the shore, when we all turned to the bright prospects of the future: from the fulness of hope, some experienced a trifling reverse in the penalties exacted by Neptune from interlopers on the sea; some got sick, some sorry, some sad: the crew, as usual, thought only on their occupations and their messes; and without any accident, for a wonder, 'the most unfortunate man in the world' arrived at Barbadoes.

The packet into which I transferred myself

was the Skylark, commanded by Captain M'Donald, a gentleman who spoke rather broadly his vernacular tongue, and who joined to that damning proof of his country, the sometimes distinguishing mark of trifling venality. We had on board altogether fourteen passengers, and we started on the 3rd of May 1810, the trade-wind blowing as usual, and were soon out of sight of the low hot island, which the inhabitants call 'Little England.'

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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